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SKETCHES FROM LIFE

BY MRS. JAMES E. THOMPSON









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# SKETCHES FROM LIFE:

BEING

## Tales on the Ten Commandments

AND

VARIOUS TEXTS OF SCRIPTURE,

INCLUDING REMARKS ON THE SERVICE OF THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH,  
INTENDED FOR THE USE OF SUNDAY SCHOOLS.

AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED TO

The Scholars of Christ Church Sunday School, London, Ont.,

BY THE AUTHORESS,

MRS. JAMES C. THOMPSON.

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*"Quæque ipse miserrima vidi,  
Et quorum pars magna fui."*

—VIRGIL.

"Most afflicting scenes which I myself beheld, and in which I bore  
so large a share."

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TORONTO :

HUNTER, ROSE & CO., WELLINGTON STREET.

1876.

BV  
4656  
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1876

ENTERED according to the Act of the Parliament of the Dominion of Canada, in the year one thousand eight hundred and seventy-six, by HUNTER, ROSE & Co., in the office of the Minister of Agriculture.

HUNTER, ROSE & Co.,  
PRINTERS,  
WELLINGTON STREET,  
TORONTO.

## PREFACE.

For this little work, revised and enlarged, now presented a second time to the public, I ask its indulgent criticism, that its many faults may be overlooked in consideration of the object for which it has been written.

I have found that so many of the books forming S. S. libraries are as dead letters, such as memoirs, etc., etc., the children will not read them; they are either too dry, or they do not interest them sufficiently to arrest the attention on the several virtues intended to be inculcated.

The following events having been enacted under my own immediate observation, may, perhaps, by their truth, obviate in a measure this difficulty. My aim is to point out the good or evil which can be done by example—the many privileges enjoyed and the danger incurred by throwing such advantages away.

I trust there is not a sentence to be found which could lead one little one astray, or one precept inculcated which could sully the purest mind. To the indulgence of the Clergy and Superintendents of Sabbath Schools I humbly submit this little volume, praying that God may bless my poor efforts to bring the consideration of His holy Commandments before the young, so that they may see what danger they place themselves in by lightly regarding the precepts contained in them.

C. F. THOMPSON.



## SKETCHES FROM LIFE.

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MY DEAR YOUNG FRIENDS,—Some years since I published a small work on the Ten Commandments, and various texts of Scripture, illustrating each by a tale founded on a scene in my own life. Some of those of my pupils for whom these tales were originally intended have now become teachers themselves, others are married, and a few have passed away to that bourne from which no traveller returns.

You all know how many years I have been a Sabbath School teacher, a work in which I have taken the most sincere interest. During the time in which Christ Church was being built, a lady (who then resided in the city) proposed to gather all the children of the neighbourhood together at her own house, so as to have classes organised by the time a school-room should be ready for their reception. Under her superintendence, I had for some time a class of sixteen girls, whose ages varied from fourteen to twenty; it caused me much trouble to find how listless was their manner of repeating, Sunday after Sunday, the lessons appointed for their instruction, and I set myself earnestly to consider by what means I could interest them sufficiently, so as to be able to concentrate their thoughts on the lesson appointed for the day. Having read a work called “The Lady

of the Manor," by which the authoress, Mrs. Sherwood (whilst preparing young ladies for confirmation), adopted the plan of reading a tale illustrating the subject she was anxious to teach, I thought I would try the same, feeling sure that during my life I had passed through many scenes which, if written in the form of tales, could be made sufficiently interesting to arrest the attention of my pupils. I therefore proposed it to them, and promised that they should (after the Ten Commandments were illustrated) choose the verses from which I was to weave the tales. I found the plan succeed beyond my most sanguine hopes. Among my scholars was a young girl who was especially idle and troublesome, frequently acting in such a nonsensical manner as to upset the gravity of the whole class; although always punctual in attendance, and having her lessons generally perfect, yet so listless was her way of repeating them, that I felt convinced she had but one object in view, viz., to say them and obtain her ticket. The tales were never intended to go beyond the scholars for whose benefit they were expressly written, but having received great encouragement from many Christian friends, I had them published and submitted to the public, after presenting a volume to each of my pupils. Some years afterwards the young girl who had given me so much trouble, and who had left London, died, after a long and very severe illness. On her death bed she desired that word should be sent to me "that the tales in the little book first led her to feel how she had neglected the many privileges enjoyed in her Sabbath School, how sorry she felt, and how happy she died, trusting in the mercy of her Saviour, who had promised to blot out her sins as a thick cloud, and remember her iniquities no more."

Thus you see, my dear girls, how bread cast upon the waters was returned after many days. This emboldens me to try whether I cannot interest you, and I therefore republish the work, and enlarge it by the addition of several new tales ; and as example is generally more forcible than precept, I compose these tales from scenes in which I have myself either been an actress or eye-witness, and can only trust that they may answer the end in view, viz., to impress on the minds of the young the danger incurred by lightly regarding God's holy laws. You have all from your earliest infancy been accustomed to rehearse the Ten Commandments, without once, I dare say, considering their application to yourselves. You have doubtlessly thought (as many do) that it was not very likely you would set up a graven image to worship, or swear, steal, murder, or covet your neighbour's goods. But you must remember that God seeth not as man seeth, and that all these sins may be committed in intent, though not actually by deed. Our Saviour declares, if you break one of the least of these commandments, you have broken all, and that the wish to commit the evil is paramount to the deed itself—for that is but the consummation of the thought, which is the greater sin ; for few commit theft, murder, or adultery on the spur of the minute, although there may be exceptions ; but, generally speaking, these crimes have been premeditated and dwelt upon, till the heart has become hardened to the consequences sure to follow, and with a full knowledge of the awful sin nourished in thought so long, it has found vent in the deed. As it is my intention first to lead you to a more earnest consideration of the beautiful service of the Episcopal Church of which you have, by baptism, been all made members, I shall leave the tales on



the Ten Commandments to be brought in, when considering the Communion Service, in their proper place.

You attend church regularly every Sabbath, but your conduct whilst there convinces me that you in reality take no part in the beauty of its services ; you are either too indolent to repeat the responses, or you cannot deem that you have all and severally an interest in its prayers and supplications. Our church provides for its members the most beautiful petitions, suitable to all their necessities ; and I feel sure, if you would give it your serious consideration, that you will join with me in confessing that it would be next to impossible to feel either indifferent or irreverent, did you in reality believe that you had an interest in all its forms and ceremonies.

When the clergy enter the church, they commence the service by reading one or two verses of Scripture, which are so comforting to the contrite sinner ; no word of discouragement to the vilest, for all tell of the abundant mercies of our God, “who is slow to anger and of great kindness, and who willeth not that one sinner should perish ; who will not despise the broken and contrite heart ; but who is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” After reading one or more of these sentences, our minister calls on his people to confess their manifold sins, with humble, lowly and penitent hearts, in order that they may obtain that for which they petition, viz., pardon of their sins. He tells them, that although they ought at all times to confess their sins, yet more especially should they do so when they meet together to render thanks for all the benefits they have received ; that they are assembled in His holy house for that purpose, to hear His word, and to ask for all things necessary both for



body and soul. He then calls on all to join him with pure hearts and humble voice in making their public confession.

Here our Church desires that all should kneel ; but, alas ! how many remain in a sitting position. Is it one in which to seek God's pardoning mercy ? Should we dare thus to approach our earthly sovereign had we a petition to present ? Most certainly not ! How, then, is it that the confession of our manifold sins is offered to God, who alone can pardon them, in such an irreverent posture ? with lips repeating what the heart refuses to acknowledge. We ask God "to restore those who are penitent, according to His promises declared unto mankind in Christ Jesus our Lord." If we felt ourselves the sinners we confess ourselves to be with our lips, and really felt our need of the mercy we implore, and which we have justly forfeited, could any position be too humble in which to approach our merciful Judge ? Can anything be more insulting to the Most High than the indolent posture and careless utterance of petitions so fraught with our eternal interests ? How many continue whispering to each other and gazing around on the congregation, whilst the minister, rising from his knees, pronounces the absolution.

Now, remember, that this applies only to the contrite and penitent. God has given power to His faithful ministers to pronounce pardon to all who with true penitent hearts return unto Him and believe His holy gospel.

The minister has no power to look into the hearts of his congregation, nor is he allowed to be their judge ; but I am sure he must often feel grieved when he sees the irreverent and indolent posture of some, who scarcely deem it worth their while to join in the responses, in which all have such an

important interest ; it would seem indeed as though the service was intended solely for the minister, if we judge by the cold, listless manner the responses are repeated, in which all should join. Then our beautiful service would be what it was intended by the Church—one universal lifting up of heart and voice in prayer and praise to Him who sitteth upon the throne and unto the Lamb for ever.

After the absolution follows the Lord's Prayer, in the commencement of which God graciously permits us to address Him as "Our Father." The title so tender, so familiar to every child, is well calculated to banish all fear as we offer the petitions contained in it, so simple and yet so comprehensive. We desire to hallow or honour His holy name ; and pray that His kingdom may come, viz., that His blessed gospel may be spread throughout the universe, and that His will may be done by us here below as the angels perform it in heaven.

Then we ask for our daily bread, enough for our present wants, as our Saviour taught His disciples "to take no heed of the morrow, as God knoweth we have need of these things."

Then follows the petition for pardon of our sins ; but with this petition there is a condition annexed, "As we forgive those who have sinned against us." Now, when we go to rest with anger rankling in our hearts against those with whom we are at variance, and rise in the morning still unsoftened, what a mockery is this petition ! is it not a breach of the Third Commandment, repeating with our lips words which our hearts refuse to respond to ? How can we take God's name in vain in a clearer manner than by asking Him to grant us what we have no intention of according to our fellow-creatures ? Let us all beware how we thus mock God, and remember His ex-

press declaration, that “if we forgive not men their trespasses, neither will He forgive ours ; nor will He hold any one guiltless who thus taketh His name in vain.”

The next petition, to be kept from temptation and delivered from evil, is also but too often a mock prayer. Perhaps we are intending that very hour to indulge in the sin which does so easily beset us—to enter some place where the temptation to sin is not easily overcome, or where the amusements, to say the least of them, are of a very questionable nature. If we are guilty of some fault deserving punishment from our earthly parents, could we with any justice ask its remission if we were conscious that we intended to act precisely in the same manner again ? How, then, do we presume to ask God to deliver us from the evil to which we are fully determined to expose ourselves ? Remember this truth :

“ We might as well kneel down  
And worship gods of stone,  
As offer to the living God  
A prayer of words alone.

“ For words without the heart  
The Lord will never hear ;  
Nor will he to those lips attend,  
Whose prayers are not sincere.”

This beautiful and comprehensive prayer is then concluded by our confessing that “the kingdom, power and glory are God’s for ever and ever.—Amen.”

After a few sentences read by the minister, and responded to, or ought to be, by the congregation, follow the Psalms in order as they are appointed, and which are so arranged that, there being one or more for every day in the month, they are

read throughout at least fifty-two times every year, independent of any extra services which may be appointed.

Who can read the poetical language in which they are written without feeling the heart uplifted to the God whose attributes of power, goodness and mercy, they portray so forcibly? "These sacred songs exhibit the sublimest conceptions of God, as the Creator, Preserver, and Governor of the universe." Many of them are also prophetic of our Messiah, and point out in unmistakable language the great plan of man's redemption. It is indeed a book for everyone, because, whatever our circumstances, trials or temptations, in it are to be found words of comfort which are just as if put there to suit every case. In them, how strongly does David extol the attributes of the Almighty! He calls upon all to fear Him and magnify His name. How powerful is the language he uses, as he calls Him his strong rock and defence, his might, his shield and buckler, a place to hide in, his castle and deliverer, a very present help in time of trouble, his hope and his strength, a great king upon all earth; and ends his beautiful songs by calling upon everything that has health to praise the Lord. Every Psalm, when read in church, ends with giving "glory to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be: world without end. Amen."

After the Psalms are read, follows a chapter from the Bible, taken always from the Old Testament, unless special lessons are appointed for any holy day—such as Christmas, Easter, Whit and Trinity Sundays, etc. Then is read, or sang, the *Te Deum Laudamus*, or the acknowledging the praise due to God from all His creatures on earth: from the angels, cherubim and seraphim, from the glorious company of the apostles, the goodly

fellowship of martyrs, and the holy church throughout all the world ; and ending by a prayer to be kept without sin, for mercy to lighten us, so that we may never be confounded. The second lesson, taken from the New Testament, then follows. Now, when you consider that two chapters from the Bible are read during both morning and evening service, besides the Epistle and Gospel, you will see what an immense amount of scripture is read throughout the year, and must acknowledge how diligently our Church sets before her members the blessed tidings contained in the Book of books. Happily in this broad land of Canada there are but few who cannot read their Bible, but in England it was not always so ; and many poor creatures would never have heard its holy precepts and comforting words, but for the Sabbath service when they would drag their weary limbs to sit beneath the sound of the gospel, and drink in its sweet and precious promises for the salvation of their immortal souls.

After the second lesson, the beautiful Psalm, calling upon all lands to be joyful in the Lord, to serve Him with gladness, and to come before His presence with a song, is read or sung. In it we are told, “to be sure that the Lord is God ; that He has made us, that we are His people and the sheep of his pasture—and exhorts us to go into His gates with thanksgiving and into His courts with praise : to be thankful unto Him, and speak good of His name.” And why ?—“Because He is gracious, His mercy is everlasting, and His truth endureth from generation to generation.” This Psalm ends by ascribing glory to God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost ; and is followed by the Creed, with which you are all familiar even from your earliest childhood. In it you confess your belief in God, who



is the maker of heaven and earth ; in Jesus Christ His only Son, in his crucifixion, death and burial ; in His ascension into heaven and His presence at the right hand of God, from whence he shall come again to judge the quick and the dead—and again, in the Holy Ghost, the holy Catholic Church, the communion of Saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.

I need only refer you to your Prayer-book to see that after the Creed is read, we are all desired to kneel devoutly, whilst the minister calls on the Lord to have mercy on all, and again repeats the Lord's Prayer, in which we are all commanded to join with loud voice, as also in the short sentences which immediately follow ; but how seldom do we hear more than two or three voices, responding to the cry for God's mercy ! Many are perhaps actuated by a fear of ridicule, especially among the young ; many deem it vulgar to speak aloud, and therefore whisper the responses to themselves ; while upon others they fall unheeded on the ear. But we do not go to church for man's approval, but for the worship of God, and therefore need no excuse to come boldly to the throne of grace, and pour out our petitions to Him whose ears are never deaf to our cries, either for mercy for ourselves, or giving to Him, what is so justly due, all honour and praise.

The beautiful Collects (which are short comprehensive prayers) here follow in order ; but as you repeat them, and have them explained to you every Sunday in your Sabbath School, I need not dwell on their exceeding beauty or adaptation to all our wants ; but proceed to the consideration of that part of our Church service entitled the Litany, a form of supplicatory prayer in which every one should join with humble heart and reverent

posture, whilst we call upon God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Ghost, and the blessed and glorious Trinity, to have mercy upon us, miserable sinners. Yes, we confess ourselves miserable sinners, and pray to be spared from all evil and mischief ; to have the offences of our forefathers remembered no more ; from God's wrath and everlasting damnation we pray to be delivered from, and we offer as a reason for our supplication that Christ has redeemed us with His precious blood—a plea from which God has promised He will never turn away.

Again, we pray for deliverance from all the sins which doth so easily beset us, and then from the lightning and tempest, plague, pestilence, and famine ; from battle, murder, and sudden death ; from sedition, privy conspiracy, and rebellion ; from all false doctrine, heresy, and schism ; from hardness of heart ; and lastly, contempt of God's word and commandments.

Can we show greater contempt, whilst repeating all these evils, from which we cry continually “ Good Lord deliver us,” if we repeat them with our lips alone, whilst the eye is wandering over the congregation, and perhaps mentally remarking upon some peculiar fashion of dress or behaviour of our neighbours ?

Here then we again put in our plea for deliverance. By the mystery of the holy incarnation, nativity and circumcision ; baptism, fasting and temptation ; by the agony and bloody sweat ; by the cross and passion ; by the precious death and burial ; by the glorious resurrection and ascension, and by the coming of the Holy Ghost. By these remembrances do we plead for deliverance in all times, but more especially in the hour of death and in the day of judgment : a day which will come to all, and we know not how soon ; let us not then pray

with dead hearts against that awful time when all must stand before the judgment seat of Christ.

The next part of the Litany, we pray for the church universal, for our gracious Queen and all the royal family ; that they may be defended from all danger, and ever seek God's honour and glory.

Then for our bishops, priests and deacons, that they may rightly preach the Word, and by their living set it forth and show it accordingly.

Then for the Lords of the Council, and the magistrates, that they may have grace to execute justice and maintain truth.

Then for all nations, that they may have the gift of unity, peace and concord.

Then we pray for ourselves individually, that our hearts may love and dread God, that we may live after His commandments ; we ask for increase of grace, that we may meekly hear the Word, receive it with pure affection, and bring forth the fruits of the Spirit ; that all who have erred and are deceived, may be brought into the way of truth ; that those who stand may be strengthened, the weak-hearted comforted, the fallen raised, so as to overcome Satan.

That all who are in danger may be succoured ; all preserved who travel either by land or water ; all who are sick ; children, prisoners and captives ; that the fatherless and widow may be defended and provided for, as well as all who are desolate and oppressed, and mercy shown to all men.

Then we pray for forgiveness on all our enemies, persecutors, and slanderers, that their hearts may be turned ; and that God will give and preserve to our use the kindly fruits of the earth. These requests, so applicable to all, both old and young, end by



a prayer for the repentance and forgiveness of all our sins, negligences and ignorance ; and that we may be endued with the grace of the Holy Spirit to amend our lives according to God's holy word. We then beseech the Son of God to hear us : as the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world, to grant us His peace ; with entreaties for His mercy ends these beautiful petitions, which are so comprehensive of all our wants, that nothing is omitted, and nothing needed to render perfect this most sublime portion of our Church Service.

Here the Lord's Prayer is again repeated, and followed by a cry to the Lord, to deal with us not after our sins, neither to reward us after our iniquities. What a solemn request is this ! and yet how seldom do we act towards our fellow-creatures in accordance with it ; how often do we hear of the most revengeful feelings nourished against those who have injured us. Does not God declare, " Vengeance is mine, and I will repay it ? " How dare we then take the punishment of our wrongs into our own hands, and then cry, " Deal with us not according to our sins ? " Are we not bidden to forgive our enemies, and not resent their conduct by revenge ? Will not God deal with all according to their deserts ; and do not we make our prayers a mockery, whilst asking God to assist us in all our troubles and adversities ; against the evils which the craft of man and subtlety of Satan worketh against us ; that these evils may be brought to nought by His almighty power ; if we refuse to await His own time, by taking the redressing of our wrongs into our own hands ?

Again, we call upon the Lord to arise, help us, and deliver us for His name's sake. And then we make the declaration, that we have not only heard with our own ears, but by our

Fathers of all His noble works, and again beseech Him for His honour to arise and help us.

Do we not, by all these supplications, openly confess that without God's help we are unable to help ourselves ? for we continue still to pray for defence against our enemies ; for forgiveness of our sins ; for mercy to be showed us : and our plea is, as we do put our trust in Him. We then beseech Him to look with mercy on our infirmities, and for the glory of His name to be turned from all those evils that we most righteously have deserved ; we ask that in all our troubles we may have trust and confidence in His mercy, and evermore serve Him in holiness and pureness of living, so that it may all abound to His honour and glory.

Are these the prayers to offer with our lips, if our hearts are so far from responding that we are actually during service communing with ourselves how best we shall increase our worldly store, or punish those who have deprived us of the power ?

The general thanksgiving prayer here follows, in which we offer humble and hearty thanks for all God's goodness and loving kindness, not only to ourselves individually, but to all mankind. But more especially we acknowledge His inestimable love in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ, for our means of grace and our hopes of glory. Then we ask for a due sense of all these mercies to be given us, that we may be unfeignedly thankful, and be enabled to show forth God's praise, not only with our lips, but in our lives, that we may walk before Him in holiness and righteousness all our days.

You see, my dear young friends, how our Church dwells on the necessity of our feeling what we ask. Surely our beautiful

service is nought but a mockery to those whose hearts respond not to its prayers and supplications ; nor can any one presume to expect God to hear or answer the lifeless prayers which are repeated, Sabbath after Sabbath. Remember, we cannot deceive Him ; His all-seeing eye piercest the inmost recesses of our hearts, and He will surely turn a deaf ear to the prayers which are not sincere.

Let us then, as we acknowledge God's promise to be with even two or three if gathered together in His name, join in all sincerity of heart in praying that our petitions may be fulfilled as may be most expedient for us, that we obtain in this world knowledge of His truth, and in the next life everlasting.

The minister then concludes by praying that the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, may remain with us all evermore. Amen.

After a hymn is sung, follows the reading of the Commandments, prefaced by the Lord's Prayer, and a Collect in which we acknowledge that to Almighty God all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid. We then ask Him to cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of His Holy Spirit, that we may love Him and magnify His holy name.

How appropriate this prayer before reading the Commandments, which you all know were written by the finger of God, and given to Moses on Mount Sinai.

Now, I propose here to illustrate each one for your instruction, amusement, and I trust benefit, and may it, with God's blessing, be instrumental in awakening your attention, and lead you to consider more earnestly the sin incurred by lightly regarding these Commandments.

## FIRST COMMANDMENT.

“THOU SHALT HAVE NO OTHER GOD.”

THIS commandment is fully understood by you all. You know there is but One. You also read in your Bible the judgments which those nations brought on themselves who, forsaking the worship of the true God, bowed down to wood and stone. You who possess the inestimable privilege of living in a Christian land, where you can, without fear and trembling, worship the great and living God; who on each succeeding Sabbath are invited to come into the courts of His house, think, I am sure, that you could never fall into the error of worshipping any other: still, we are all too prone to set our affections so firmly on earthly objects, that we forget God, provoking Him to punish us by depriving us of our cherished idol. I will now relate a case of a very dear friend of mine, who, leaning too much on an arm of flesh, gave to the creature what alone was due to the Creator.

About a mile outside the beautiful village of Ilfracombe, Devonshire, England, there resided a gentleman with whose family we had been intimate acquaintances for years. Possessed of an almost princely fortune, he spent his time chiefly on his own estate, consoling his tenantry in trouble and rejoicing with them in prosperity. He was indeed one of nature's noblemen; truth and honour were stamped on his countenance, and he justly gained the confidence of all.

Well do I remember the evening on which he brought home his young bride. Never had the bells of Radmosko Church rung out a more joyous peal than the one which welcomed

with their sweet chimes the lord of the manor to the princely home of his forefathers. All the villagers, in holiday attire, had assembled at the park gates, the children bearing baskets of flowers with which to strew the path of their beloved landlord. Every garden had been bespoiled of its richest blossoms to do honour to this occasion, and much happiness might have been augured for the young bride's future, from the bed of roses over which she passed into her husband's home. I, with my two sisters, had been staying a week with his sister, preparing everything for the reception of the bridal pair, and we now stood upon the terrace before the house awaiting their arrival.

The scene was almost oppressive with the intensity of beauty—what pencil could depict it, or who could gaze on it unmoved? The sun was just sinking in the glorious west, tinging all around with the golden hues of its departing splendour, the noble trees rich in their summer verdure, the thriving orchards, the velvet turf studded with flowers of every hue, sloping down to the silver lake, on which quietly rested the stately swan. This, then, was the scene which greeted the eyes of the fair bride as she passed through the park gates. Every eye was strained to catch a glimpse of the future mistress, and loud and joyous were the shouts of welcome which fell upon her ears as she was lifted from the carriage and borne into the house to meet a double welcome there—

“ Oh ! how wise is that decree  
Which hides from us futurity ! ”

Could that young and happy creature have then and there lifted the veil, how would that fair scene have faded into darkness and despair.



It would be impossible for me to dwell on all the happiness enjoyed by this wedded pair, as hand in hand they walked together, administering to all the wants of the needy. Grace's winning beauty and gentle manner won all hearts; ever ready to listen, to sympathize and relieve all who walked in the humbler paths of life.

Grace's love for her husband was nothing short of idolatry; alas! she leaned on him, and him alone, content to rest solely on his strength and love.

“ And only as he looked on high,  
Would raise her thoughts above;”

forgetting God, from whom all her happiness was derived, and feeling gratitude alone to the husband, who, with unsparing liberality, lavished every kindness upon her. Alas, poor Grace! terrible was the lesson taught before she saw the sin of setting up an earthly god.

Within a year after the birth of a son, her idolized husband was stricken with brain fever, in consequence of a fall from his horse, and was hovering on the borders of the grave, when an urgent summons from Grace brought me once more to her side. Heartrending was the scene. Poor Grace's wild, almost insane agony was frightful to witness, as she dragged me to the bedside of her beloved husband.

I saw by the physician's face that he had given up all hope. All his skill, and the patient's wealth, so lavishly expended, failed to call back the spirit held in such iron bonds. The invalid lay wasted to a shadow, burning with a consuming fever, which denied rest to his wearied frame.

How melancholy to listen to the whispered voice, hushed

step and stifled sounds which heralded the deep quietness of death!—to see the traces of such intense suffering on the noble brow, the glassy eye which gave no answering look of love to the one who had so tirelessly watched by his sick bed!

Poor Grace! it was sad to hear her words of wild entreaty to God for his life; it was sinful. There was no meek submission to His will as she poured out the anguish of her spirit, making as it were terms with God. “His life—she asked no more.” All God’s bounteous gifts she would gladly and willingly resign for that one boon—“his life.” Any chastening but this one—death!

Alas for poor Grace! her rebellious prayer was answered; the boon so madly craved was granted; the life so wildly prayed for was spared; but with returning health reason’s light was quenched for ever.

I can find no words adequate to express the bitter anguish of the stricken wife, as the fatal truth struck with its stunning force upon her shattered nerves. She saw the idol she had bowed down to bereft of reason’s power, and deprived of all those noble attributes which had so long caused her to forget God, giving thanks to the creature before the Creator from whom all her blessings came. But God’s ways are not our ways; mysterious are His dealings with the children of men. It pleased Him in His own good time to sanctify this dreadful trial to my young friend. In the intensity of her happiness she worshipped an earthly God, but in the bitterness of her anguish she found her heavenly one. With the deepest humility she acknowledged the justice of her punishment, and on bended knees confessed that God had bowed her rebel spirit down to His unerring will.

In this short tale you will see the danger incurred by breaking this express command, that "we shall worship but one God." God will not suffer His glory to be given to another. From Him all good comes, and to Him alone belongs the honour.

Let us, then, all beware how we so love our fellow-creatures as to exalt them above God, and thus provoke Him to deprive us by death of our cherished object ; or, as in the case before us, blot out that inestimable blessing—reason's light.

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## SECOND COMMANDMENT.

"THOU SHALT NOT MAKE TO THYSELF ANY GRAVEN IMAGE."

IN this Second Commandment we are forbidden to set up an idol to worship. God declares in it, "for I am a jealous God, and will visit the sins of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation."

What a solemn warning to every parent ! Who can look upon their innocent children and not tremble at the contemplation of being the instruments of bringing, by their wilful sin, such a curse as this on them ? And yet how many cases of drunkenness, disease and insanity do we meet with, in our daily walks through life, as transmitted by parents to children, to be by them yet further handed down to future generations.

In considering this commandment you will remember how many cases are related in the Old Testament of people setting up idols to worship. Aaron made a golden calf for the Israelites, and King Nebuchadnezzar a golden image, and you read how God punished them. Now, of course, we are not



likely, as in those days, to cut out images in gold, iron, wood or stone, and set them up as gods to worship and bow down to, because we know the utter uselessness of such an act ; but there is one thing all are too prone to make a god of, viz., gold—all acknowledge its mighty power, and the owners of it are courted and sought after for its sake. How often do we find people whose characters are very questionable, yet if they possess wealth their conduct is overlooked or leniently censured, and they are admitted into society which, but for their gold, would justly spurn them. You also see others, who, having been poor all their lives, remain in obscurity notwithstanding their many excellent traits of character ; whilst others, who rise suddenly from the poverty which the world despises to the enjoyment of unexpected wealth, are immediately courted and sought after by those who before this would never have noticed them. What does Solomon say ? “ What will riches profit a man in the day of wrath ? He that trusteth them shall fall.” And again, “ A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favour rather than silver and gold.” And our blessed Saviour exhorted His disciples “ To lay not up for themselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt ; but in heaven, where neither moth nor rust can corrupt, nor thieves break through nor steal.” For He declares that “ where your treasure is there will your heart be also.” Alas ! my dear young friends, we daily see the mass of mankind seeking diligently for the gold which perisheth, and too often neglecting, in their eager search after it, to lay up that treasure which is to constitute their eternal gain. I now wish to make this subject interesting to you by the short history of a man with whom I was well acquainted, who, making an idol of his gold, died without

one hope for mercy ; he had shown none, but had made unto himself an idol to worship, had cruelly used its power, and found it could give no comfort in the hour of death.

Mr. Tillett, who lived about a mile and a half out of the town where I resided, was, in the true sense of the word, a miser—loving gold for its own sake, and not for any good it gave him the power to do ; to relieve any distress, however urgent, either by a gift or loan, never, I feel sure, entered into his calculations.

He had accumulated large sums of money by advancing it on mortgages, demanding usurious interest, and foreclosing without mercy as soon as they fell due ; he showed mercy to no man when money was the question. “His treasure was,” as our Saviour declares, “on earth, and there was his heart also.” He had an only sister, who lived some five miles distant from him ; this young girl had incurred his anger by uniting herself with a man who possessed no other means than his own industry, a thing altogether contemptible in his eyes ; and I feel sure he took a savage delight in witnessing her struggles with poverty, when, after a few years of peaceful contentment with their lot, her kind husband was called away to enjoy the more lasting happiness of the world beyond the tomb.

She made but one appeal to her brother—nothing but the sickness of her babes would have tempted her to have done so. This was a great triumph for Mr. Tillett, to have his sister sue for a portion of the wealth which she had denied as being at all necessary to ensure happiness, and had declared herself happier in her poverty than he was with all his wealth, wrung from the bitter necessities of his fellow-creatures. How he laughed her to scorn, and desired her to ask help of the unseen

God in whom she trusted, and not in the visible wealth she despised ; for not one single sixpence would he give to save her or hers from the workhouse.

Does not this shock you ? Can you fancy a brother condemning his only sister and her children to poverty while he was steeped to the throat in riches ? But did he not hurt himself more than he injured her he sought to persecute ? Does not Solomon declare that “the treasures of wickedness profit nothing ; and again, that “the Lord casteth away the substance of the wicked ?”

Now, you will see how this truth was fulfilled in Mr. Tillett's case. One night I was sitting up with one of my little children, who was very ill, when that sound so painful to hear rung out on the midnight air—“Fire ! Fire !” The bells tolled quickly, and in a few minutes the glare of the fire illumined all around. It was some time before I could ascertain where it was, but at last could distinctly hear the people (who had been roused from their beds) crying,—“It is only Tillett's barns, let them burn ;” “the fire may as well consume the grain as the rats,” another would say, “for none of it will ever fill a hungry mouth ;” and, laughing loudly, they sought the shelter of their own homes, caring nought for the misfortune which was greedily destroying the property of a man so detested. The fire raged for hours ; the barns full of wheat, granaries full of grain, and large stacks of hay, all fell before the devouring element. No one seemed to care, no pity was felt, no help given ; so the fire was suffered to work its will, and desolate indeed was the scene which the morning light unveiled—the blackness of desolation, where yesterday all had been full and plentiful ; and doubtless, like the rich man in our Saviour's parable, he had

thought within himself "What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? But this I will do: I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there will I bestow all my fruits and goods. And I will say unto my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink and be merry." But God had said: "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee; then, whose shall those things be which thou hast provided?"

It was supposed that Mr. Tillett caught a violent cold that night, which, added to his despair, brought on a very serious illness, and it was soon known that he was called upon to leave the idol he had so long worshipped; that he was now reaping the fruit of the seed he had sown. The conscience which for years he had stifled now asserted its long dormant power; it was sharper than a two-edged sword; he tried to shake it off, as he had so often done before, but it would not depart. He raved frightfully, begging to have the money-bags lifted from off his breast, which in his delirium he fancied were weighing him down with their load. His wealth appeared to him as crushing him—smothering him under its burning weight.

Oh! that all those who love the fleeting riches of this world could have stood by that death-bed, what a terrible lesson would it not have taught! Alas! how much of the gold and silver of this world is obtained by fraud, injustice and oppression! Read what St. James says:—"Go to, now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and your silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire."

A frightful denunciation indeed, and one fully realized by Mr. Tillett, whose death-bed was a terrible warning to all who, instead of using the wealth committed to their charge in relieving the destitute and needy, make it their god, thus bringing themselves under the condemnation of that law which forbids all to make unto themselves an idol to worship in the place of the only true God.

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## THIRD COMMANDMENT.

“THOU SHALT NOT TAKE THE NAME OF THE LORD THY GOD IN VAIN, FOR GOD WILL NOT HOLD HIM GUILTYLESS WHO TAKETH HIS NAME IN VAIN.”

THIS commandment, my dear young friends, is perhaps more frequently broken than any other ; it is most grievous to hear young people so often call upon the sacred name of God, either to attest the truth of what they assert, or because it has become a fixed habit from its long indulgence. But do you think that God will hold you guiltless ? Surely all who use His sacred name in so irreverent a manner forget that for such a breach of His commandment He will certainly bring them to judgment. I can scarcely express to you the feeling which oppresses me when I hear so many of the youths of this city constantly making use of the sacred name of God in their games ; the oaths they make use of are fearful to listen to. Can they really believe that God hears them when that dire expression, “God damn my soul !” is thundered forth in their passion ?



Oh ! how often do I hear it from the lips of little boys whose tender years would seem to be a sufficient safeguard from such blasphemy.

If we consider it in another light, it would appear dreadful. No gentleman would be guilty of this breach of the third commandment, for swearing is a sure stamp of a vulgar mind ; and no one, whatever his talents or education, can lay claim to the title of gentleman who thus deviates from the rule which should distinguish him as one and a Christian.

I will now endeavour to illustrate this commandment by relating an event which happened in my own home, and caused me much mental suffering.

A young lad who had lost his mother always used to spend his vacations at my father's house, who, being a great friend of Harry's father, was always a welcome guest. My sisters and myself were each allowed a small plot of the garden ground to cultivate according to our different tastes ; and as Harry, like myself, was passionately fond of flowers, we were generally together, either digging, watering or planting.

I think I see him now, with his bright handsome face, his large dark eyes beaming with intelligence and fun, and his hair clustering in thick curls around his small, well-shaped head. No one could feel dull in his presence ; his merry, joyous laugh was ever breaking forth ; and he was so kind, so obliging and willing to assist every one, that it was impossible not to love him. But Harry had one serious fault, and that was, constantly breaking the third commandment. The sacred name of God was but too frequently introduced into his conversation. "It is true, by God ;" or, "God knows it ;" or, "I will do so, by God," being the expressions he made free use of.

How often have I sat under the shade of our beautiful trees talking to Harry of his sinful habit, for I had a dreadful fear of taking God's name in vain. My dear young friends, in those days the system of educating children was altogether different to the one pursued now. Severe punishments were inflicted for wrong-doing, without the real evil being pointed out—children were then so much under the control of governesses, who were more frequently chosen for their severity than for their talents ; and I remember how I used to shudder as mine used to threaten poor Harry with all the horrors of hell. Had she spoken to him of our compassionate Saviour who died for sinners, and whose blood, shed on the cross, could cleanse from all iniquity, things might have been different ; but no, she told only of God's fearful judgments, nothing of His tender mercies ; so he looked on Him rather as an angry Judge than a kind and compassionate Father.

I had my own childish feelings on the subject, but knew not how to explain them, and could only tell him as I had been told myself. Harry used to try and laugh away all my dreadful fears ; but it was useless. I could not divest myself of the dread feeling that God would not hold him guiltless who was so constantly taking His name in vain.

Well do I remember the last time that I ever spoke to him upon this subject. It was a bright morning in July, and he had been assisting me for hours training carnations and roses, filling the vases in the drawing-room, and watering all the house plants. We talked incessantly, for he was to return to school the next day, and as each breach of the third commandment issued from his lips, did I implore him to desist, which he would do for a while ; but the evil had grown with Harry's

growth, and strengthened with his strength, as all evil habits will, till he was powerless to cure himself.

In the afternoon Harry and my brother went out for a ride, which was their usual custom, and I retired into the arbour to prepare my lessons for the next day. After remaining there some time, my sister Ellen rushed into the arbour with a face pale as death, and unable to articulate a single word. Some minutes elapsed ere I could gather from her lips the tidings she came to tell, viz., that Harry had been thrown from his horse and brought home insensible.

Without stopping to hear any particulars, I ran through the garden into the breakfast-room, the windows of which opened on to the lawn, and there a sight met my eyes which time will never efface from my memory. Harry was lying on the sofa; my dear mother was vainly trying to staunch the blood which was gushing in streams from his mouth; his eyes were staring wildly open, but no sign of life was there. The doctor arrived in a few minutes; my heart seemed as if it stood still till I should hear the dreadful fiat. "Dead!" I exclaimed, and before he could echo my words, I had found relief from my agony and horror in insensibility.

It was not till the next day that I heard from my brother the particulars of this sad event. It appeared that Harry, dear wilful Harry, had insisted upon leaping his horse over a wide ditch, against my brother's advice and urgent entreaties, who knew that the horse had never been trained for leaping. The horse at first refused to stir; but with a stroke from Harry's whip, and his usual expression, "By G—, I will make you," trembling on his lips, the horse was urged forward. Not being able to clear the ditch, of which my brother had warned him, Harry



was thrown, and his head came in violent contact with the stump of a felled tree which lay across the ditch.

Words would be inadequate to express my horror at this recital, aggravated as it was by the bitter knowledge that he had died with God's name on his lips, not with a cry for mercy, but with his usual profane manner of taking that holy name in vain. I could never describe to you the agony I endured, the nights of anguish I spent ; how I hung over his coffin and prayed that God would have mercy on him. He looked so beautiful as he lay shrouded for his grave. There was no sign of the violent way in which he had met his death ; he had died in the full enjoyment of his robust health, and decay had had no time to wither his young fresh beauty.

At last the morning came which was to remove him for ever from our eyes. The solemn tolling of the muffled bell, the white plumes of the hearse, the young gentlemen who, with their white hat-bands, gloves and scarfs, were to be poor Harry's pall-bearers, are distinctly before my eyes, although so many years have elapsed since it took place. I had gathered all my white roses and placed them on his breast just as they closed his coffin. I could not shed a tear as it was borne from the room ; my brain seemed seared with a red-hot iron ; his dying words rung in my ears ! Oh ! what would I not have given to recall him ! I could find comfort nowhere ; all was the darkness of despair.

I never hear God's holy name taken in vain that this scene does not occur to me in all its harrowing bitterness. For years I never repeated the third commandment without a shudder ; and I now exhort you all most affectionately to ponder seriously over this tale, that should you ever feel

tempted to err, you may remember the sad fate of poor Harry, and God's express declaration that "He will not hold him guiltless who taketh His name in vain."

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#### FOURTH COMMANDMENT.

"REMEMBER THE SABBATH DAY TO KEEP IT HOLY."

THIS day, as you all know, has been from the creation of the world set apart as a day of rest from labour. It was on this day that God rested from His work of creating the heavens and the earth, and commanded it to be kept holy unto Himself. We learn in this commandment that God rested on it, blessed it, and hallowed it. The word Sabbath signifies rest, and is the general term by which Sunday is known. We read how very strict the Jews were in the observance of this day ; and should we be less so ? more especially as it is celebrated by Christians, as the one on which our Saviour rose from the dead.

In it we are forbidden to do any manner of work, our sons, our daughters, our servants, and our cattle ; but alas ! how often is it a day of weary toil to the noble horse, who is obliged to give his strength to those who seek pleasure on the Lord's day ; how often, from earliest dawn till night, do we see the streets filled with vehicles of all sorts, bearing the Sabbath breakers to pleasure parties, ending too often in saloons where the intoxicating cup is freely drank, and leading to midnight brawls, in which evil passions mar the sweet peace which should reign triumphant on God's holy day.

Many people think that as long as they do not dance, play cards, or frequent places of public amusement, that they have done nothing to break God's express command to keep the day holy unto Himself ; but it needs not these things to render any of us guilty, and I will now, by a short tale, endeavour to prove to you that the Sabbath can be desecrated although not one of these individual sins are committed.

A widow lady, who has been long numbered with the dead, had two daughters, twins, whom she loved most devotedly. Being the only surviving children of a large family, she unfortunately indulged them to excess ; she could not endure to thwart their wishes—consequently the necessity of self-control formed no part of their character. As they grew up, selfish gratification was their only aim. Emily and Marion Villiards loved their mother I dare say, but they never dreamed of giving up their will to hers, or obeying her slightest wish ; and as they advanced to womanhood, and were introduced into society, which their beauty and rare talents were well calculated to adorn, this vice became too palpably visible to be overlooked. Haughty to their superiors, insolent to their inferiors, they were universally disliked by all classes.

As their mother's foolish indulgence had fostered all that was evil in their nature, it was not to be expected that they would yield to her remonstrances as to the way they spent the Sabbath. If they attended church, the service was generally half over ere they pronounced themselves dressed to their satisfaction ; and when there, their conduct was light and frivolous in the extreme. We had all been taught by our dear mother to feel such reverence for the house of God, that I remember how awe-struck we used to feel when we saw these two girls (whose

pew adjoined ours) frittering away the sacred minutes in whispering to each other, or gazing around on the congregation; but no one but their old nurse, privileged by her long years of servitude, ever dared to take them to task for the heartless manner in which they invariably spent this holy day.

The time of which I write, we were not, as you are, my dear young friends, blessed in our clergyman; he took very little pains to instruct the youthful members of his flock. There were no Sabbath schools in our town—consequently it was the more needed that religious instruction should be imparted at home. Here I would pause a minute to impress on your minds the privileges you enjoy. You are an especial charge to your minister, who enters into all your enjoyments (so natural to youth), and aids both by his purse and presence amongst you. Your religious instruction is every Sabbath afternoon superintended by himself, and you are cordially invited to attend morning and evening service in the courts of God's house. You can never, then, plead ignorance as an excuse for breaking the Sabbath, as you are well instructed in all the duties required of you. Value your privileges, my dear young friends, for they are of inestimable price.

In the course of time these two young girls were married, and they entered on their new duties with the same indifference to the sacredness of the marriage tie as characterized all their other actions. I was but a young girl at the time, yet I can recollect how shocked I felt at the heartless manner in which they parted from their mother. Poor woman! surely in that hour she must have felt the full sting of the injurious system of self-indulgence which she had pursued with them.

Her ambition was certainly gratified as far as mere worldly

prosperity was considered, but the moral and religious principles of the chosen protectors of her daughters were never thought of; the sacred duties of the marriage tie never discussed; so Emily and Marion Villiards left the home of their childhood without one sigh for the duties unfulfilled, or a thought of the new ones to be fulfilled.

I cannot describe to you how grieved I felt for poor Mrs. Villiards that morning. I could not enjoy the festivities of that festive scene like my companions—my heart was so sad in the midst of the splendour, thinking of the bereaved mother sitting in silence and tears, the only sad one amongst that joyous throng. The wedding party was altogether composed of young people; the sisters being married at the same time, had, with their usual selfishness, insisted on the exclusion of all elderly people. After the departure of the bridal party, we were to spend the time until dinner wandering about the beautiful grounds, and in the evening were to have a dance by moonlight on the lawn, which had just been freshly mown for the occasion. After all the young people had separated into groups, each one on their own pleasure bent, I sought Mrs. Villiards, and taking advantage of the kindness she had always shown to me, used all my powers of persuasion to be allowed to drive her round the park in her pretty pony phaeton. The law of kindness had been so duly impressed on us all by our dear mother, that any selfish mode of enjoyment could never yield us one iota of pleasure, and I am sure that I was happier that afternoon driving Mrs. Villiards, than I should have been sharing the sports of the young people, whose merry shouts of laughter-loving fun we could distinctly hear as we drove along the margin of the lovely piece of water which skirted one side of the park.



When we were sent for at night, Mrs. Villiards entreated my mother so earnestly to allow me to remain, that she consented, and I thus became an eye-witness of the scene which was the means of bringing poor Mrs. Villiards to her grave.

About eight weeks after the wedding, Mrs. Villiards received a letter, stating that, as the two brides were returning from their tour on the Continent, they intended stopping a week with their mother previous to their settling in their new abodes, and requested, or rather, I should say, ordered the carriage to be sent to the station on the following Tuesday afternoon. Poor Mrs. Villiards ! how her heart rejoiced over this proof of what she considered their love for her ; while I could only see in it a fresh proof of their selfishness. The peace and rest of home was much to be desired after travelling for weeks, before rushing into the whirl of a London season ; however, it was no business of mine. Happy in the anticipated happiness of my kind friend, I gladly assisted her in the needful preparations for her coming guests. The wished-for day at length dawned bright and clear, and the carriage was dispatched at an early hour for the travellers. I went with Mrs. Villiards over the house again and again, so fearful was the indulgent mother lest anything should have been left undone which could by any means conduce to the comfort of her beloved children. The choicest flowers were brought from the conservatory, the rarest birds from the aviary, to add fresh charms to the already richly-decorated rooms.

At last, convinced that nothing else could be done, we sat down together in the drawing-room to await their arrival. I left the room as the carriage drove up to the door, for I felt that the first greeting was a joy which a stranger had no right to participate in, but I was soon convinced that this feeling was



entirely thrown away upon these heartless women; no tear dimmed their eyes, and there was no sign of that softened feeling which one might expect from a young bride entering her mother's house for the first time as a guest. They seemed perfectly indifferent to all the preparations made for their comfort, took no notice of anything, but, pleading fatigue, retired early to their rooms.

I cannot dwell on the events of the week following their arrival, but it was very evident that little love existed between these two young wives and their husbands, for already had the most absurd quarrels disturbed the sweet peace of home. Marion was by nature frightfully passionate, and her sister, brother-in-law and husband seemed to me to take delight in aggravating her beyond endurance—an act almost as fatal as passion, inasmuch as it is the fuel which feeds the fire, and leads to deeds which in all probability would never have been committed, if unassisted by its powerful darts; so few can withstand its baneful influence.

On Sunday morning, previous to our attending Divine service, a serious quarrel had taken place, and such bitter words had been used that I thought neither of them would venture into the house of God in such a dreadful state of mind, with every unkind feeling towards each other rankling in their hearts. But how mistaken were my ideas! it was too good a chance for displaying their bridal finery to the expectant gaze of the public, to be thrown aside, as it would be their last Sabbath at home. Alas! how little Marion thought it would be her last on earth. Surely, if such a shadow of the future could have then crossed her path, she would have shrank from the frivolous trifling which marked her conduct the last time she was ever to enter a living soul into the holy sanctuary; the last time she

was ever to hear the minister exhort all to keep holy the Sabbath day.

During the afternoon Mrs. Villiards was sent for to visit a dying woman, on whose sick bed she and I had been attending for some time past. She did not return to dinner. After the cloth was removed, Marion's husband, who had been drinking freely during the meal, and who seemed bent on disputing, commenced taunting his wife about her frivolous conduct during Divine service. As his own had been little better, I could not help thinking it would have been as well for him if he had held his tongue. Bitter recriminations followed fast upon one another, till the quarrel rose to an alarming height. Of course I was too insignificant a person to be regarded by them, but I was old enough to tremble at the scene. Neither would listen to reason, and Emily, instead of endeavouring to quell such a disgraceful scene, added fuel to the fire by her aggravating words and insulting laughter. This so exasperated Marion that she rose, and, seizing a dessert knife, would have stabbed her sister had not her foot caught in the flounce of her dress, throwing her heavily to the ground, her head coming in violent contact with a steel fender. In a minute all was confusion and dismay. Marion was borne senseless to her room, while messengers were dispatched for her mother and doctors.

It would be a vain task for me to attempt to describe the scene which followed. Marion had ruptured a blood-vessel, and only survived eight days. It was fearful to listen to her ravings. Conscience, so often deadened, then resumed its power, and showed her that her whole life had been one of rebellion against the laws of her Maker. The agony of the mother no pen could pourtray, as she listened to the ravings of her dying child ; she was indeed reaping the fruit of that folly which had

caused her to overlook the spiritual in the temporal welfare of her children. Her affections had been so centred in these two girls, that she could not endure to oppose their slightest wishes ; consequently their unchecked evil passions had taken deep root, and were now bringing forth to her the harvest of bitter agony and self-reproach.

On the following Sabbath afternoon, Mrs. Villiards and I were sitting in Marion's room, upon which the shadow of death had already descended. The invalid, worn out by her mental struggles, now lay exhausted on her pillow, for nature was fast succumbing to the mighty power of death ; but no persuasion could make her say she forgave her sister or husband. What she felt it was not for us to judge, but her dying words were not calculated to give us hope that she died in peace with them. The exertion of speaking caused her to faint, and in this unconscious state her spirit returned to the God who gave it.

A few words more and my tale is done. Mrs. Villiards gradually faded away from the day of Marion's death. Remorse worked its slow but sure revenge on her delicate frame. She sought mercy with deep penitence and tears, and who shall dare to say that she found it not ? As soon as she was committed to the grave I returned to my home, having been allowed, at the earnest request of Mrs. Villiards, to be with her till the last. It was a melancholy scene which I had passed through, but it impressed more deeply on my mind the awful sin of breaking the fourth commandment, in which we are strictly bidden to "keep holy the Sabbath day."

## FIFTH COMMANDMENT.

“HONOUR THY FATHER AND THY MOTHER, THAT THY DAYS MAY BE LONG IN THE LAND WHICH THE LORD THY GOD GIVETH THEE.”

THIS commandment is, as you all know, the only one of the ten to which a promise is annexed. You read in the Bible of the severe punishments God always caused to overtake those who rebelled against their parents. Solomon exhorts his son to hear the instructions of his parents, assuring him that “a wise son maketh a glad father, but a foolish son is the heaviness of his mother ;” also, that “length of days, and long life and peace shall be added to him who forgets not his father’s law.” I can fancy no sin so likely to call forth God’s anger as the disobedience of children to their parents.

It would seem, indeed, as though they knew better than those whom God has appointed to be their guides and instructors, if we judge by the saucy answers and rebellious looks of some young people when chided for their faults, or denied some amusement of which their parents do not approve. You should all remember this truth before setting at defiance the commands of your parents, that God will surely require at every mother’s and father’s hand the soul committed to their care, for He commands them to bring them up in His fear and love ; and if they will allow their children to walk unchecked in the broad path of sin, they will surely reap the seed of their own sowing.

But from you, my dear young friends, I look for better things. You know what is due to your parents—the debt of gratitude you owe, and which never can be paid—and I feel sure



your greatest delight will be to shield, by your loving care, their old age from any suffering you can prevent. I will now tell you a tale of a little boy whose short career on earth was characterized by the observance of this commandment, whose life was a sacrifice to his obedience, and whose patience under suffering and resignation to God's will leaves him as a bright example for children to follow in his footsteps.

A young woman, who had been for years servant in our clergyman's family, formed an attachment to a mechanic whose name was Edward Maynard. He was an excellent workman, and found constant employment when sober, but he possessed such a love for ardent spirits that few liked to trust him. Jane having from her childhood lived in the best families, had acquired much of that taste which so unfitted her for the station she so foolishly chose for herself. In vain did all her friends, especially her good old master, remonstrate with her, pointing out the danger as well as the sin she was incurring by uniting herself to a man so addicted to drink ; but Jane, poor foolish girl ! fancied her influence would be all-sufficient to wean her husband from this bad habit, and woke, as many have done before, from her dream of happiness, to find herself the neglected and ill-used wife of a drunkard.

Poor Jane ! how bitterly she repented, now that repentance came too late ! She felt how wilfully she had closed her eyes to the sad fate all saw would be hers, and what sympathy could she claim ? Had she not walked into the snare in spite of entreaties and warning ? and now she must bear a life-long burden of misery, doubly aggravated by seeing her helpless children suffering for her folly. The eldest boy, who is the hero of my tale, was a pretty, curly-headed, intelligent little fellow, inheriting the natural refinement of his mother, of whom he was

passionately fond, and for whose unhappiness he seemed to possess an intuitive sympathy from a very early age. He clung to her with an all-absorbing love, as if he fain would shield her from the brutality of his drunken father. His artless efforts to render her lot less miserable was the only gleam of sunshine in her wretched existence. Many a night, when her brutal husband drove her with blows and harsh language to take shelter in her garden, would the little innocent boy follow her, and laying his head on her bosom, speak words of love and comfort, and offer his artless prayer to God that this bitter cup might pass from his mother's lips.

Edward was a great favourite with the clergyman, who took a most lively interest in all the youthful members of his flock ; but by the young wife of our kind physician he was almost idolized ; he was her pupil in the Sabbath school, and his intelligent mind was indeed fit soil in which to sow the seed of God's Word, sure of bringing forth fruit unto eternal life. Often did Mrs. Seymour discuss the character of her young pupil, but her love for him was always damped by the presentiment that he was not destined for this world. "He is too good, too bright," she would say, "to linger here." Alas ! how prophetic were her words !

When Edward was about twelve years of age, his father, who had long made use of his services, and tasked his delicate frame far beyond his strength, had insisted one afternoon upon his carrying a hod of brick up a ladder. The consequence was that the poor little fellow, overbalanced by the weight, fell just as he reached the top, and was carried home fearfully injured to his mother's cottage, who had but a few days previous added another infant to the miserable and ill-regulated household. Dr. Seymour and his kind wife did all that lay in their power



to alleviate the sufferings of the little patient, who bore without a murmur, for his mother's sake, all the pain caused by his injuries, suppressing every moan lest she should fret because she was forced to yield the task of nursing him into the hands of others.

It was with a heartrending burst of sorrow that Mrs. Seymour told me, about ten days after the accident, that her husband, who had hoped against hope all the time, had that morning informed her that his injuries were beyond the skill of an earthly physician, and requested me to accompany her on a visit to her little favourite, whose short career was fast drawing to a close.

As we walked along, Mrs. Seymour expressed to me the deep regret she felt at the anticipated death of the boy in whose welfare she had so long been interested ; although she could not but acknowledge the wisdom and mercy of that decree which would remove him from a life of suffering and misery to join the happy band of children who stand around our Saviour's throne.

When we arrived at the cottage, I was struck with the sad change in the little patient. The sunken eye and labouring breath told a tale of fearful suffering. As Mrs. Seymour advanced to his bedside, his eyes brightened, and with an exclamation of delight, he endeavoured to raise himself from the pillow. Mrs. Seymour gently raised him, whilst I fed him with some strawberries we had brought, so refreshing to his parched and fevered lips.

Poor Edward had that morning been told by Dr. Seymour of his hopeless state, and now he begged of Mrs. Seymour "to be kind to his dear mother for his sake." He said "her grief had been harder to bear than all his pain ; oh, try and comfort her,

my beloved teacher ! ” continued the little boy. “ Exhort her to be resigned to God’s will. Tell her that my constant, earnest prayer since I lay here has been that God may change my father’s heart, and make him kind to mother. I know how sorry he will feel when I am gone that he did not listen to my entreaties not to be sent up the ladder with such a heavy weight. I knew I should fall, for I felt so weak in my head that morning ; but it was my duty to obey my father, and I tried—indeed I did, dear teacher ; but my eyes got so dark that I missed the step, and could not recover myself when I felt the hod falling over. Father said, ‘ I did it on purpose, so that I might have an excuse to stay at home ; ’ but you will not believe I could be so wicked—you who have taught me the beauty of truth, of God, of my Saviour. I can never repay the debt of gratitude I owe you, my beloved teacher ; but you will not forget me, and let your little boys sometimes visit my grave, and teach them the priceless value of the religion which takes from me all fear of death. My mother—my darling mother—is the only sting I feel.”

“ Say no more, dear Edward,” exclaimed Mrs. Seymour, as the little boy fell back with exhaustion, “ I will, with God’s help, never forsake your mother or the children, and will use every effort to reclaim your father. God will listen to your prayers, dear, and although it is His will that you should not live to see their fulfilment, you may rest assured in His promise, that ‘ whatever you ask in His Son’s name, believing, it shall be granted unto you. ’ ”

Mrs. Seymour then knelt down, and offered a short and simple prayer adapted to the wants of the dying boy, who, clasping his poor little thin hands together, earnestly joined with feeble voice in the Lord’s prayer ; at the conclusion he fell into a

sweet sleep, whilst we walked into the other room to see the heart-broken mother, who, weakened by ill usage and her late illness, seemed unable to cope with the bitter trial awaiting her. "Oh, madam! what does the doctor say about my darling boy?" exclaimed the poor woman as we approached her bedside; "Oh, will he die?" Mrs. Seymour, accustomed to witness all kinds of both bodily and mental suffering, whilst visiting her husband's patients, gently strove to prepare her for the sad truth which her husband had that day confirmed—violent sobs and tears were all she could gain from the wretched woman. The certainty that her sole comfort was about to be taken away rendered her almost insane in her agony, and gladly did we hail the entrance of the dear beloved clergyman (her old master), who had just stepped in, his daily custom, to pray with the little sufferer.

Sweetly did he talk to the miserable mother of that bright and glorious home to which her child was fast travelling, and of that compassionate Saviour who had called the little children to Him. He then prayed fervently to the God of all power and might, to give a spirit of resignation to the heart rebelling against His decree, and to grant that the stroke which was almost crushing the mother might in His own good time be the means of awakening her husband to a sense of his guilt, and bring him an humble penitent to the footstool of our Redeemer, who has promised, "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."

The sobs of the poor mother became less violent, and she bore, with more composure than we expected, the doctor's visit. He told her, as he thought it best, the truth, "that there now existed not a shadow of hope, as mortification had already set

in, and the one comfort he could alone give her was that the few short hours would be free from suffering."

He then appeared very anxious that preparations should be made for the night, and asked who was to remain with the little boy ? Maynard's conduct had always been so rude and almost insulting to those who had kindly offered their services, that few were willing to subject themselves to it, and the nurse had as much as she could attend to, for the infant was fretful, owing to the restless state of its mother, and required constant care.

Mrs. Seymour requested her husband to allow her to stay, and as I was only too glad to assist her, the doctor, after some little hesitation, consented, and after giving directions what he wished to be done, left us to keep our sad watch in the chamber of death.

Dear Edward passed a quiet night, free from all bodily suffering ; although when morning dawned it was plain to all that on him another sun would never rise. It was beautiful to witness this young boy's trusting faith. The idea of leaving his beloved mother to all her trials and sufferings, unsolaced by his love, had been the one great trouble which had weighed so heavily on his spirit during his sickness ; but now that anxiety seemed at rest, with such perfect confidence did he commend her to his Heavenly Father's care.

About 8 o'clock in the morning Maynard rose to his breakfast, and coming into the room, asked in the most insulting manner what we did there ; that we were only encouraging that lazy boy in his fancy for lying on his bed and shirking all work ; and declared that if he did not get up, he would pull him out of bed and compel him to go.

A cry of agony from the mother told that she had heard the



brutal threat. This so exasperated him that he went to the bedside, and was about to seize the child, when I caught his arm and dared him at his peril to touch the boy. Whether the signs of death so strongly marked in Edward's face deterred him, I know not, but disengaging his arm from my grasp, he left the cottage with an oath of defiance on his lips. A few minutes only elapsed ere the doctor and clergyman both arrived, and by their presence restored peace to our agitated spirits.

The shock, however, to the little boy's exhausted frame proved too much for further endurance. He struggled to rise ; as Mrs. Seymour raised him up a stream of blood gushed from his mouth ; and, his head falling on her bosom, his redeemed and purified spirit returned to Him "with whom is no variableness or shadow of changing."

On the next Sabbath afternoon dear Edward was borne to his last resting place. Beautiful and most impressive was the address of the minister to his young flock as they surrounded the grave of their lost companion. How earnestly he exhorted them all to follow his bright example in the obedience he had shown in keeping the commandment to honour his parents. No treatment, however harsh or unjust, had tempted him to depart from the respect due to his father. His life had been given as a sacrifice to his obedience ; and now, who could doubt that he was reaping a bright reward, in the land beyond the tomb, of life eternal and a crown of glory that fadeth not away ?

Some years passed before Maynard was brought to a sense of his wickedness, but, thank God, who doeth all things well, the prayers of his little son and the efforts of Mrs. Seymour were crowned with success, and he became as remarkable for

his sober and good conduct as he had been for the contrary. He never forgave himself for being indirectly the cause of his son's death, and endeavoured by all means in his power to follow the footsteps of his sainted child. Jane had at last the satisfaction of seeing her husband respected by those who had once both hated and feared him. Their children were well educated, and they are now in their turn, teaching their children to obey the commandment of God which bids all "to honour their father and mother, that their days may be long in the land."

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## SIXTH COMMANDMENT.

"THOU SHALT DO NO MURDER."

YOU will, my dear young friends, wonder among yourselves how I can illustrate the Sixth Commandment by any event in my life. You will not think it possible that I was likely to be placed in any scene where the crime of murder was perpetrated. But, alas ! it was my lot many years ago to be witness of such a deed, and also to give evidence on the trial which followed its commission.

But before I tell you the particulars of this sad event in my life, I cannot forbear pausing to make an urgent appeal to you all against the danger of yielding yourselves a prey to turbulent passions. No one can say where its consequences are to end. Remember the first murder that was ever committed, and the fearful curse pronounced. "And now art thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy



brother's blood from thy hand ; when thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto you her strength ; a fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth." What caused this dread deed ? We read, " Cain was very wrath." Yes, anger caused a brother to spill the blood of a brother. The effects of anger are dreadful ! Do not make the vain boast that you are not likely to commit murder. Are we our own keepers ? If we allow passion to be our master, who can say that we are able to keep it within bounds ? It is in its effects as fatal as the mighty avalanche which sweeps all before it. I have seen so much evil from its effects, I have suffered so deeply, that it makes me so much more urgent with you, my dear girls, to shun its direful consequences. A blow struck in a moment of passion sent a beloved son of mine to an early grave—a boy in whose future so many hopes were centred, whose talents promised success in life, and whose kind and amiable disposition endeared him to all. Never shall I forget that day ; he had left me at one o'clock to resume his studies, whistling a merry tune as he wended his way, little dreaming that he had looked his last on his home and mother. At three he was brought home in a lifeless state, and, without being able to articulate a single word, expired in about fifteen minutes. The anguish and bitterness of that hour—who can picture it ? All my fond hopes for him blasted by that wicked blow, struck in a moment of passion. What a day of darkness and despair, in which all the kind sympathy I received from the people in St. Thomas (where this sad event happened) failed to give one iota of comfort !

A young man wrote some lines upon this sad event, which he had printed and sent to me ; they are so pretty, that I will here transcribe them for you, that you may feel convinced that

this is not a mere made-up tale that I am writing on the Sixth Commandment :—

“ I gazed upon thee yesterday, in all the hope and pride  
Of joyous boyhood, when the earth seemed bright on every side ;  
And sunny dreams were passing then, thy youthful spirit o'er ;  
But oh ! I dreamed not that the sun should set on thee no more.

“ And when I gazed upon thee, the future seemed to be  
One long and bright and joyous path of happiness to thee—  
A pathway decked with many flowers, of beauty and of bloom,  
But oh ! no cloud of death was there—no shadow of the tomb.

“ Oh ! God, how wonderful to man is Thy mysterious will !  
Oh ! teach us in Thy chastening hand to see Thy mercy still ;  
Teach us to rest our hopes upon the merits of Thy Son,  
To bow before Thy throne and cry, ‘ Father, Thy will be done ! ’

“ And thou, fond mother, though thy heart is crushed and sad to-day,  
Remember it is God who gives, and God who takes away.  
When this dark pilgrimage is o'er, earth's sorrows and its gloom,  
Thy boy shall yet be with thee, in the land beyond the tomb.”

I will now proceed to tell you another scene of which I was an eye-witness, and which, I feel sure, will still more fully convince you all of the danger of giving undue sway to our wicked passions. Let us endeavour, with God's help, to stifle the evil in the bud, being encouraged by the promise that “ God is faithful, and who will not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able ; but will, with the temptation also, make a way to escape that we may be able to bear it.”

Situated about sixteen miles from the town where we resided was an excellent inn, where travellers going to and fro from the town of I —— always stopped to dine or sup, or rest their horses. The landlord was a very respectable man, kept a good

house, and carried on a successful business. He was, generally speaking, a quiet, shy man, although at times it was said he gave way to fearful bursts of passion ; but all allowed that his fits of anger were caused by the aggravating, sarcastic spirit of his wife. I knew nothing more of this couple than could be learned by staying occasionally a few hours at their house, when passing from one town to another. They were both exceedingly civil and kind to their guests, and made every effort for their comfort.

I was one evening with my brother and sister returning home from the town of I ——, where we had been enjoying the Christmas festivities, when a violent snow-storm suddenly overtook us, and so blinded the horses that it was nearly midnight before we reached the inn. It was long after the time travellers would be likely to be expected, so the parlour fire had been suffered to die out, and we gladly accepted the landlord's invitation to seat ourselves before the kitchen fire, in order that we might dry our wet clothes, which were saturated with the snow that had been falling for the last four hours.

The landlord was most pressing on us to remain all night, but we knew that they were expecting us at home, and as the storm seemed abating we were anxious to continue our journey.

As we required no supper, the landlord got us some biscuits and proceeded to mull some spiced wine, which is done by heating red-hot a poker and stirring it into the wine. He had been drinking himself, but was certainly not intoxicated, because he talked very rationally to my brother about some law business which my father was transacting for him. As his wife had not made her appearance, according to her general custom when females were in the house, we concluded that she had retired to bed ; and were very much astonished when she

entered the kitchen, and, without taking the slightest notice of us, commenced lavishing on her husband the most insulting and opprobrious epithets, evidently in reference to some former dispute. Her husband, white as death, desired her to leave the room, directing her attention to us, but it was of no avail. So bitter and sarcastic were the taunts which issued from her lips, that she seemed more like a demon than a woman. She must have seen that her husband was trembling with suppressed passion. Why then did she tempt him ? This is a question I cannot answer. I only know that before my brother could interfere, the incensed man, goaded on by passion seemingly beyond his control, had snatched the sharp red-hot poker from the fire, and hurled it, all hissing as it was, at the wretched woman. She fell ; the iron had penetrated the lungs, and she never spoke again.

Fancy the fearful remorse of that man as he gazed on the body of his victim ! What would he not have done could he have recalled the life his hand had taken ! I trust that I may never be called upon to witness such another scene ; it was almost too frightful for contemplation.

At the trial, we, of course, could not deny, as evidence, the extreme provocation he had received. We felt certain that the deed was done in the moment when, passion asserting its full power, reason had trembled in the balance.

So deep and bitter was the remorse of the poor prisoner, that he died a broken-hearted man within nine months. As my father was well known to the chaplain of the gaol, we had no difficulty in obtaining free permission to visit the poor man. It was at first, he told us, almost impossible to impress on his mind that there could be pardon for him ; he could not realize the condescension of that love which, having bought his soul at



such a price, was ready to wash out his sin and cleanse him from its mighty power. One thing called for our admiration, and that was his refusal to listen to the provocation he had received as an excuse for his crime. It seemed as though God, in His infinite wisdom, caused the heart of the poor penitent to be so impressed with his own sin, that he sought to make no excuse for himself, but every one for his victim ; his deep humility precluded all attempts to shelter himself under the plea of his wife's aggravating temper.

He was at last enabled to cast himself entirely on the mercy of our blessed Saviour, "just as he was, without one plea to rid his soul of that dark spot," and he died without one fear but that our Saviour's blood could wash it out and present him blameless at the throne of God.

Will you not, my dear young friends, let these two events act as a warning to you to shun the deadly sin of anger ? I would refer you to the verses in the Proverbs of Solomon, whom you know was the wisest man, and he declares that "He that is slow to anger is of great understanding, but he that is hasty of spirit exalteth folly ;" and again, "A soft answer turneth away wrath, but grievous words stir up anger." Let us, then, all endeavour to stifle angry thoughts, lest they ultimately lead to the consummation of the deed, and which in God's eyes are just as guilty, and will surely sooner or later bring us under the condemnation of that law which says — "Thou shalt do no murder."

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## SEVENTH COMMANDMENT.

"THOU SHALT NOT COMMIT ADULTERY."

THIS commandment, which comes next under our consideration is of great importance, and but too often violated. You

are all old enough to understand that marriage was instituted by God, in the time of man's innocency, to signify the mystical union between Christ and His Church. You will also remember that it was at a marriage feast, honoured with our Saviour's presence, that he performed His first miracle, that of turning water into wine ; which event has been so beautifully expressed by a young clergyman in these words—

“ The modest water, awed by Power Divine,  
Confess'd its God, and blushed itself to wine.”

Marriage thus being a sacred ordinance, instituted by God Himself, should never be lightly undertaken either by man or woman. If you read the marriage service appointed by our Church, you will there find that the most solemn obligations are entered into by both parties, to cherish and love one another till death parts them ; there is no other reservation—death, and death alone, is to part those whom God has joined together, and therefore no man must put them asunder.

Is it not dreadful to read of so many cases of divorce daily taking place ? No excuse but the most frivolous ones ; they have taken the yoke upon them and will not bear it. Husbands desert their wives, wives their husbands, thus causing the crime of adultery to run riot through the land. How many young people, deaf to the advice of their parents, rush as it were into matrimony, without a thought of all the serious and important duties which await them in their new sphere, simply because their home duties had become distasteful, and they craved a change ; finding out, when too late, that duties where neither love nor forbearance dwells are more irksome than those from which they had so undutifully fled. Some will make no en-



deavour to quell their turbulent tempers, and the peace of home is destroyed by constant bickerings; again, others will not submit to the authority of a husband, as if the promise made to obey was not binding on them through life. Is it not God's command that a wife submits herself unto her husband as the head of the house, and created by God in His own image? St. Paul commends marriage to be honourable among all men—therefore, not to be taken in hand lightly or unadvisedly; but reverently, soberly, and in the fear of God, seeing that it was ordained for the mutual society, help and comfort that the one ought to have of the other, both in prosperity and adversity. The marriage service, as appointed by our church, is of itself a very solemn ceremony, and might well warn some of those foolish ones who look upon marriage in no more serious light than as a gala day for the display of bridal finery; and go to their husband's home without a thought of the engagement into which they have entered, and the solemn vows by which they have sworn to love, honour and obey, and, forsaking all others, keep only unto him, till death shall part them.

I will now tell you a short tale of a young couple well known to me, and I think sufficiently bearing on this commandment.

Mr. and Mrs. Granville lived in the same town, and a very short distance from me. I had known Mrs. Granville when a girl; she was very high-spirited and impatient of control. Unfortunately for her, her mother died just as she attained her twelfth year—a time when the kind and judicious care of a mother was most needed to train and mould her character.

A maiden sister of her father's came immediately to take charge of this motherless girl, and a person more unfitted for such a task could not have been chosen. Miss Vincent was a woman of fashion—very handsome, lady-like, and clever, but

possessing no talent for training such a girl as Laura. Her faults were all nourished by injudicious indulgence as, her aunt, proud of her niece's superior beauty and natural wit, never heeded the dormant beauties of her mind, which were choked by the weeds of her own planting.

She was placed at a fashionable boarding-school without one principle to guide her, her highest aim being to deceive all those in authority over her ; and so well did she succeed that at the age of seventeen she eloped from school with a young man of whom she knew nothing except that he was remarkably handsome, and a delightful partner in the dance.

Both her father and aunt were, as you may readily believe, furious when they heard of her marriage ; but never paused to consider how much of the blame might justly be imputed to themselves. No, this was quite overlooked, and their fury poured out on the head of the erring girl, who, after all, was more sinned against than sinning. Laura, as you may believe, commenced her married life with no more idea of its sacred responsibilities than a child of six years. There was no manner of regularity in the management of her household, for those duties were a sealed letter to her. Too soon Mr. Granville found that lady-like manners and a pretty face were not all sufficient to render home happy ; he soon became indifferent to the loveliness which had enchanted him, and kept away as much as possible from his ill-regulated household.

Laura would often come to me and pour out her complaints, but it was impossible to make her sensible that she was in reality the culprit. There was no principle to work on, consequently it was useless to reason with her—she resolutely closed her eyes to all her senseless folly. (She would call her husband “ cold, cruel and heartless ; ” and many, instead of

trying to check her imprudent complaints, encouraged her to lay bare, for the public comment, all she suffered, till the sanctity of her home was invaded, and their disagreements became the topic of our scandal-loving town.

Laura became the mother of a little girl—such a frail, delicate creature that I never thought it could live. But, for once in her life, Laura was sensible, and insisted upon nursing her infant herself, and she really seemed so fond of her tiny daughter that we began to hope that she would now, for its sake, become a good and prudent woman. But we all know how difficult it is to eradicate the settled faults of years; and I am grieved to be obliged to tell you that Laura soon found that baby confined her altogether too much to the house, and, to my astonishment, came one morning to solicit my aid in procuring a wet nurse for the little being whose life seemed just held upon the frailest tenure.

I endeavoured to point out to her, in the strongest terms, the exceeding sinfulness of her conduct. I felt too vexed even to listen to her frivolous reasons for wishing to resign to a stranger a mother's sacred duty. Was it not enough that she made home so miserable as to drive her husband to seek comfort and happiness abroad? Did she not live in open defiance of all the duties she had promised to fulfil when she became a wife? And now she was about to cast the little helpless being who had the misfortune to call her mother upon the cold love of an hireling. Mr. Granville really loved his wife in spite of her heartless folly, and would gladly have sheltered her from the world's cruel scorn, had she made the least effort to retain his respect and love. But talking to Laura was indeed like casting pearls before swine, and I could see nothing but her ultimate ruin unless a check could be given to her mad career of

folly. Many rumours were afloat in the town detrimental to her reputation, and, as she had never been a favourite, people were not slow to blame her ; she had always been too indolent to exert herself in any kind efforts made to alleviate the suffering poor, and too proud to try to conciliate the general goodwill. She was looked upon as a vain, frivolous, imprudent girl ; and she, in her turn, accused the people, in the bitterest terms, of being a jealous, unkind and scandalizing set ; forgetting how much of the deserved censure she brought on herself by her self-willed frivolity.

At last Laura's health began to suffer from the frequent bursts of hysterical passion to which she would give way whenever chided by her husband for her folly ; they became so alarming at times that I had no difficulty in persuading Mr. Granville to give me charge of the little delicate baby, till a fit nurse could be procured for it. In a very short time it began to thrive under the regular system of care to which it had been so unaccustomed.

Laura was perfectly indifferent to the loss of her child, and seemed to care very little that its innocent love should be lavished on a stranger, although she would occasionally call to see it. When baby was six months old, Mr. Granville took Laura to the sea-side, and left the little one with me. She came to bid us good-bye the evening previous to her departure. I tried to talk to her, but she seemed studiously to avoid what she used to call "my lectures." She left next morning, and I never saw her again—she ended her career as might have been foreboded from her vain and unprincipled character.

Taking advantage of her husband's absence, she eloped with an officer, whose attentions had for some time been of a most suspicious nature. Her heart-broken husband returned home



and having made arrangements with me for the future of his little daughter, procured a commission in a foreign regiment, and left England immediately.

My dear little nurseling continued with me till she was eighteen months old, and was grown a fine healthy-looking girl. About this time a maiden sister of Mr. Granville's came, and informing me of the death of her brother, requested to have her infant niece confided to her care. I was most unwilling to part from darling Nellie, but I had no authority to keep her from her father's family. So we parted, and I never saw my sweet foster-child again ; she fell a victim to scarlet fever within a year after her departure.

Since I have been in Canada, I have heard of Laura's death. After years spent in sin and folly, she died an outcast of society, without one real friend to smooth her dying pillow or whisper words of loving kindness in her ear. No bright assurance of pardon could have soothed her last moments, for delirium in all its horrors was the companion of her death-bed. This, then, was the sad end of one whose superior personal beauty and natural talent, had they been turned to account, might have rendered her an ornament of the society she outraged.

May this tale, my dear young friends, warn you of the folly and danger of such a course. Is it not ridiculous to hear so many young persons declare that "they do not care what people think of them, or say of them, as long as they are conscious that they commit no crime?" Let me assure you, that that very fancied security under which you act is frequently your ruin. No female can bid defiance to public opinion, and retain that respect which ought to be her safeguard. Every appearance of evil should be as jealously guarded against as the



evil itself. It is no proof of your freedom from criminality, because you are really pure, if your actions are of such a nature as to condemn you. The world is censorious ; therefore all need so to guard themselves that the whispered slander cannot tarnish their fair name. Fancy such a death-bed as Laura Granville's ! Certainly we cannot, ought not, or dare to fix any limits to the mercy of the Almighty ; but still we can have but little hope in a death such as this. It was, indeed, a just punishment, and one that will sooner or later surely descend on the heads of all those who live and die in open defiance of the commandment which forbids us " To commit adultery."

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## EIGHTH COMMANDMENT.

"THOU SHALT NOT STEAL."

THIS commandment, which forbids us taking anything to which we can lay no claim, requires our serious consideration. You know as well as I can tell you that many people imagine by just taking a trifle that they do not injure the person from whom they take it, so that it lessens the sin ; they, perhaps, never go beyond what they call little thefts, and who, while they would neither take clothes out of a drawer, or money out of a purse, think it no crime to help themselves to tea, sugar, fruit or any other nicety which they have taken a fancy to. But surely they forget that anyone who takes a trifle to-day may feel less scruple in seizing on something of greater value to-morrow ; and thus it is that from small beginnings, vice overruns the whole character, and utter ruin but too fre-

quently ensues. It is in vain for any one to say I do not intend to run such lengths. The effect of sin is powerful—it is as mischievous as a small spark, which, when falling upon tinder, is not only sufficient to kindle fires in every chamber of a house, but even to consume the entire building.

Countless are the arguments advanced that so many have become rich by dishonest gains, and I do not seek to deny it ; but have they become happy ? We only see fine houses, clothes, and equipages, but we do not see the heart. The worm at the root of all the enjoyment—that is concealed from our eyes. Believe this important truth, that people are really happier with honest gains, than those who are feasting on the prosperity of others, though they should disdain even to look at them. The day of retribution comes at last, though sometimes long delayed ; and many who fancied themselves secure in the enjoyment of their ill-gotten wealth, have found themselves a scorn and reproach to all.

Now, I will tell you a short tale which will, I think, illustrate this truth, that “honesty is the best policy,” even in a worldly sense ; how much more so when we consider from whom the command came, “Thou shalt not steal.”

A gentleman who resided in the north of England, and possessing large estates, left the management of them to a steward for a great number of years in order that he might reside abroad, the death of his beloved wife having rendered the place distasteful to him, as reminding him of his irreparable loss. He left the strictest orders that all the good should be done among his tenantry as if he were amongst them himself. Sir Stanley Irwin was a just and upright master, kind to all his dependants, giving freely of his store for their happiness and comfort. But he lacked submission to the will of God,

who had deprived him of his most treasured idol, and left home to reside in a foreign land, to bury his sorrow among strangers.

His steward was by nature morose and hard-hearted, with an eye solely for his own aggrandizement ; he was both hated and feared by the villagers, for he punished with unsparing hand any trespass on the game rights of the manor. After a period of 18 years he one morning received a letter from Sir Stanley, desiring him to have everything put in order at the manor-house for the reception of himself, his widowed daughter and children, and expressed a hope that he should find everything in a flourishing condition. That Sir Stanley would ever return to the scene of his great sorrow never for a moment entered into the calculations of his steward ; and now thus suddenly to be called upon to give an account of his stewardship—how could he answer for the possession of flocks and herds and lands, without confessing that they had been purchased with the money entrusted to him by his master for the relief, comfort and assistance of the needy, sick and afflicted tenants on the estate? His salary, although very handsome and adequate to his wants, could not by any possibility have been so eked out as to justify him in the possession of so much wealth.

Where was the good done among the tenants to be found ? Not in repaired cottages, for which the inhabitants were so often by him distrained for rent ; leaking roofs and unplastered walls, broken doors and patched windows, told how little attention had been paid to the landlord's wishes. He had been living in affluence for years—revelling in wealth wrung from the bitter necessities of others. He remembered how often the clergyman of the parish had besought him to write to Sir Stanley about ameliorating the condition of his tenantry, and

to whom he had always held up Sir Stanley as as hard a task-master as Pharaoh among the Israelites. He had sown, by dishonest and cruel conduct, ill-will and discontent among the people, and the once peaceful, simple tenantry had become a set of outlaws bidding defiance to both law and justice.

The steward was in despair ; he saw the day of retribution at hand, and was too well acquainted with Sir Stanley's character to hope for any less punishment than the loss of his situation and a blasted name. He could not even do as we read the unjust steward did in our Saviour's parable, make friends among those he had oppressed ; for his unpopularity he could plainly read in the averted eye and half-muttered imprecation whenever he came nigh. He had not one friend, for all had been equally oppressed.

How was his noble, kind-hearted master to be met ? Would he not come expecting, as he had a just right to expect, a flourishing village and happy tenantry rejoicing in the plenty provided for them by their generous landlord ? A month—one little month—this was all that was given him to prepare, for how could Sir Stanley dream of all the wheels to be set in motion ? What was to be done ? How could he stand face to face with his master and give an account of his stewardship ? This was the dread question which he dared not answer. Had he not by usury and unjust gain increased his store, turned a deaf ear to the cries of the suppliant ? And now he found everything slipping from his grasp. It would be his turn now to sue for the mercy he had denied to others, and conscience told him how little he deserved it. Everything around proclaimed him a thief, and one of the worst stamp, for he had abused the trust confided to him by his master, filling his barns with the produce which should have been given to others.



Time, however, does not stand still, and swiftly did it seem to travel to the wretched man as on the day appointed Sir Stanley Irwin once more stood in the halls of his forefathers. A few days sufficed for an investigation of his estate, and to his surprise and indignation he found that he had ranked in the mind of the clergyman and of his tenants as a cruel, hard master, who refused to aid his people. The guilt of the pale trembling culprit as he stood before his judge was sufficiently depicted in his countenance. Confession was needless, and he was by Sir Stanley immediately dismissed his service with the ignominy he so well merited; but first he was made to make what restitution lay in his power, and thus was he driven in his old age from home with the brand that he had himself stamped upon his brow, because he had refused to obey God's commandment that—

“Thou shalt not steal.”

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## NINTH COMMANDMENT.

“THOU SHALT NOT BEAR FALSE WITNESS AGAINST THY  
NEIGHBOUR.”

THIS commandment, my dear young friends, of the six which are devoted to duty to our neighbour, calls, I think, for very serious consideration, for it is so frequently broken. Hardly a day passes in which we do not hear of irremediable mischief being caused by its influence among the dearest friends and acquaintances. Surely all who practise this sin forget the heinousness of it in the sight of the God of truth, and who has



expressly declared that "lying lips are an abomination to the Lord." How careful should we all be, when repeating anything, to be strictly truthful in our narration.

Some people indulge in such a habit of gross exaggeration, that they ever speak only in a hyperbolical manner ; others misrepresent facts from a careless, thoughtless habit ; but many, I am sorry to say, do it for the real love of the mischief which they are well aware will follow. Some are so fond of repeating everything they hear said against another, and finding ready listeners, add little by little every time, thus making a mountain of the molehill, and it is impossible to tell where the consequences will end.

You have, I dare say, all read the laughable story of the "Three Black Crows," simple in itself, but a very conclusive argument against the sin of exaggeration. My object in this little work is to point out the danger to which we all expose ourselves when deviating from the right path. I am going to tell you a tale on this particular subject, and I trust it may act as a warning to all young people, and prove the necessity of truthfulness in your recitals of any event passing under your notice. But before I commence I will just pause here to tell an anecdote which happened a few years since, the falsity of which cooled a friendship which has never revived its former warmth.

A lady with whom I used to visit, and be on very intimate terms with, was remarkable for her very untidy dress and habits ; but such was the natural grace of her form and manner, that it was not so much noticed as it would have been, I dare say, on a less pretty-looking person. We had always been warm friends, but I perceived after a while a great and marked coolness in her manner towards me ; she came less frequently

to see me, and asked me as seldom. It was some time before I heard the reason, and then a lady informed me that "I need not wonder at Mrs. ——'s coolness, for I had made use of a very unkind and unladylike expression concerning her to Miss L——." Not having the slightest recollection of having done so, I requested to know what it was that I had said, and was told that in the presence of two or three I had made the remark to Miss L——, "that Mrs. —— always looked like a dirty dishcloth."

After considering for a while, I distinctly remembered that one afternoon some ladies were, in my presence, making remarks upon the untidy appearance of Mrs. ——, on whom they had just been calling. Miss L—— joined very ill-naturedly and sneeringly into the debate against her, and I, feeling provoked that she should thus speak of one with whom she visited, and I knew had been very kind to her, made the remark, that "it certainly was a pity she was so careless, but they must all allow that did she but tie a dishcloth round her waist, she would still look the lady."

Now you see how these words were misrepresented by Miss L——, causing a coolness to spring up between two people who had always been friendly with each other. Of course I received an apology from Mrs. —— for having allowed herself to be so prejudiced, and I accepted it, but there was always afterwards a restraint between us, though probably by this time Mrs. —— has forgotten all about it.

I will now proceed to tell you another event in my life, which will, I think, fully illustrate the misery which can be caused by breaking the commandment now under our consideration.

About a mile from the town in which I resided after I was married, there lived a lady to whom I became exceedingly at-

tached ; she was my senior by twenty-four years, and being both wise and clever, was a friend any young person might have felt proud of possessing. I certainly was, for she was noted for being extremely particular in the choice of her associates. To me she was all kindness and generosity, and with the tender loving kindness of a mother did she act the part of a sincere friend. She would frankly tell me of my faults, and advise me against their repetition. Fortunately for me, I had the sense to value her friendship, and endeavoured to profit by it, although many of my younger companions would sneer, and ask "if I were willing to be kept in leading strings all my life ?" But as time went on, my affection for Mrs. Stanley increased more and more with my better knowledge of her.

I had, with my nurse and three children, been spending a few weeks at the sea-side, and had been home about three weeks, when I began to wonder why Mrs. Stanley, who had always before this been the first to welcome me home, had not paid her accustomed visit ; and I was the more surprised, because she had stood sponsor for one of my twin daughters, who was named Florence after her, and in whose welfare she had always taken the sincerest interest, frequently telling me that "as she had no children of her own, I must spare this little one to her."

Fancying she might be from home or unwell, I determined to drive over and see what was the matter. Accordingly I did so, and to my utter astonishment was told by her footman that "his mistress was engaged with company, and could not conveniently receive me." This message perfectly petrified me. How often had I gone to see her when some of her most distinguished guests were there, and she would take no excuse from me, that I did not know she had company, but insist upon me

coming in and joining her party ; and now she would not even see me. What could occasion this change ? I was so mortified that I could scarcely command myself sufficiently to drive from the door. On my way home I thought over everything that I could possibly think of which could have given offence ; always having loved her so fondly, I could not dream of a word or action which could have caused her displeasure. I felt quite ill ; the more I thought of her conduct, the more unaccountable it appeared ; but as I was conscious that I had done nothing to merit her cool treatment, I was determined to await patiently the unfolding of the mystery.

Weeks passed away, and I saw nothing of Mrs. Stanley except at church, and then it seemed to me that she studiously avoided me, a cool bow being all the notice I received. I had a very large circle of acquaintances, but there was not one individual amongst them all whom I loved like Mrs. Stanley. This was of course well known, and the coolness now subsisting between us became a topic of conversation among those who were not a little jealous of the familiar notice she bestowed on me.

Mrs. Summerville, the wife of our curate, and who had with Mrs. Stanley stood sponsor for the other twin, was the only person who ventured to mention the subject to me, and offered, with my permission, to ask an explanation of Mrs. Stanley for conduct so galling to me, and for which she thought I had a right to demand a reason. I had fretted so much about it, that I had become nervous and ill, and therefore gladly accepted Mrs. Summerville's offer, although I had but faint hopes of benefiting by it.

A few days elapsed before Mrs. Summerville called upon me



again, and gave me an account of her meeting with Mrs. Stanley. I give it in her own words.

“ When I requested Mrs. Stanley, as her minister’s wife, to inform me why she had pursued such a course of conduct towards one whom she had always loved, or professed to do, she was unwilling to give her reasons, although she seemed to consider them amply sufficient to justify the course she had pursued. I thought differently, and told her so ; also, that to treat any one with such marked coolness, without giving a reason, was an act of injustice that I had too good an opinion of her character to think she would persist in : it was due to you that she should at least give you a chance of defending yourself. Mrs. Stanley, at last, feeling convinced that I was right, told me, that ‘ during your absence at the sea-side she had requested the assistance of the young ladies in town to help to decorate her rooms for a dance which she was giving. While they were engaged, she had expressed regret that you were not there to help, because you were so fond of arranging flowers,’ &c. Miss Vicars then asked Mrs. Stanley ‘ how she could think so much of you ? declaring that the regard you professed for Mrs. Stanley was nothing but hypocrisy, put on for the sake of what you gained by it,’ and added, that ‘ you yourself had told her that you would never have asked Mrs. Stanley to have stood sponsor for your little girl, only you expected some handsome presents ;’ adding further, that you had said ‘ it was the only thing to render palatable the lectures you were sure to receive from her as a godmother.’ Again, that ‘ you had expressed a conviction that Mrs. Stanley was jealous of you, for she had herself said so ;’ and more ill-natured things Miss Vicars said, which I have no patience to repeat.

“ Mrs. Stanley then asked Miss Vicars ‘ whether what she



had asserted was in reality true, because if so all must be at an end between you.' This was evidently all Miss Vicars required ; to sever the friendship between you seemed her aim, and she again and again positively asserted that you had said all this to herself. Mrs. Stanley, both her pride and affection wounded, and not suspecting any one would dare to tell a deliberate falsehood, unfortunately took for granted what Miss Vicars had told, and the conversation dropped, Mrs. Stanley appearing so hurt that the young people were afraid she would give up the party, a thing they by no means desired.

"This, then, is Mrs. Stanley's account ; it now remains for you to contradict or confess its truth."

Words would be all inadequate to express my horror at this tale of slander, and it was so long before I could compose myself to speak that Mrs. Summerville thought it best to leave me for a few hours ; and, promising to return in the evening, left me to ponder over a tale which well-nigh drove me frantic. But it was not the slander, bad as it was, which so hurt me ; it was the feeling that Mrs. Stanley could believe me capable of such duplicity. Had she, then, so little faith in my love and gratitude that she could condemn me on mere assertion ? Could she thus cast me off without a word of defence, which even the law grants to the vilest criminal ? This was the bitter sting, and it was long before I could calm myself sufficiently so as to be able to remember what I had really said to Miss Vicars.

I recollected distinctly being asked by that young lady "why I had not had Mrs. Stanley for my little boy's sponsor," and that I had told her that as he was the first grandchild, I had wished my parents to stand, which they did, and he was called after my father ; but I should dearly like to ask Mrs. Stanley to stand for one of my twin daughters, but that I felt diffident

about asking her, as I well knew, from the many conversations we had had together upon the subject, that she entertained a very serious sense of the responsibility incurred by undertaking the office of sponsor in baptism. I knew her idea was, that sponsors should feel the responsibility which our Church originally designed that they should feel; and that parents do not as a rule consider that by appointing any one to the office that they actually give them authority to inquire into the religious training of their children. Another reason I had—I dreaded lest she should think I was expecting too much from her generous affection, for she was always loading me with proofs of her love both for myself and little ones, and I possessed a morbid horror of imposing on her indulgent kindness. Miss Vicars, I recollect, at the time laughed heartily at what she was pleased to term “my squeamish affectation,” and remarked, “that Mrs. Stanley was the very person I ought to ask, because she was rich enough to make her godchild handsome presents.”

Such an idea never for a moment had the slightest influence with me. I only thought of the real value of the advice she would be sure to give in the training of her godchild, and felt sure that, should anything happen to me, my little baby girl would find a mother in my dear friend. However, I was spared the task of asking her by herself requesting to become the sponsor. Gladly did I consent, for I knew well that she would fulfil to the very letter all the promises made at the font, and what greater boon for her child could a mother wish for?

As regarded the other foolish assertion made by Miss Vicars, that “Mrs. Stanley was jealous of me,” I could only account for it in this way (knowing that such words had never passed my lips). One afternoon, during a visit from Miss Vicars, Mr.

and Mrs. Stanley had driven up. Mr. Stanley had just stepped in to give me instructions about some rare plant of which he had brought me some cuttings, when Mrs. Stanley, in her usual playful manner, declared that "she was getting quite jealous, for Mr. Stanley had refused to cut the plant for her." Some pretty compliments from Mr. Stanley must have excited Miss Vicars' envy, or she could not have so misrepresented this simple affair and borne false witness against me.

On Mrs. Summerville's return in the evening, I related everything exactly as it happened, and as nearly word for word as it was possible for me to remember. She then invited me to accompany her on a visit to Mrs. Stanley, to which I gladly assented, and she promised to drive me over the next afternoon.

Miss Vicars was at this time staying with a lady to whose husband's brother she was soon to be united. I felt extremely reluctant to visit Mrs. Stanley unless armed with a more tangible proof than my own denial. I therefore drove over early in the morning to Mrs. Wentworth's, and requested an interview with Miss Vicars. I cannot tell all I said, or how she endeavoured to deny the charges brought against her ; but they were all too well-founded, and it was useless for her to contend against the proof of her false dealing. I insisted that she should make full and satisfactory reparation, either by accompanying me in person to Mrs. Stanley's, and retract all she had said, or write a note at my dictation. If she refused either of these alternatives, I said that I would acquaint Mr. Wentworth with the whole transaction. I sought no revenge, but justice demanded that she should act as I required.

It was some time before the guilty girl could be brought to choose between the two evils, both being equally derogatory to herself. At last, I suppose from the fear of Mr. Wentworth

she decided upon the latter course, and penned a note entirely exonerating me from the false charges she had brought against me. Armed with this missive, and my own conscious innocence, I, accompanied by Mrs. Summerville, drove over to Mrs. Stanley's, who, having received intimation of our visit, was awaiting with some anxiety our arrival.

The day had been intensely hot, and I was so ill from nervous excitement that it was with difficulty I could keep myself from fainting ; so, requesting Mrs. Summerville to be the bearer of Miss Vicars' note, I sat down in the cool hall to recover my composure. Only a very few minutes elapsed ere the arms of my dear friend were thrown around me, and I felt that every kiss was an acknowledgment of my restoration to her love. I cannot tell you of all the sorrow Mrs. Stanley expressed for her injustice. I was only too happy to grant what she so earnestly pleaded for—my forgiveness.

A low nervous fever attacked me after such a lengthened period of suspense and misery. Most tenderly did Mrs. Stanley attend on me through that time of trial, and ever after was she my sincere and warmest friend. It was a lifelong lesson to her, for never during the remainder of her existence could she have been bribed to listen to a tale, let it be false or true, against her fellow-creatures. She bitterly mourned her one act of injustice, and ceased not to exhort all her young friends to turn a deaf ear to the voice of the slanderer. Nothing ever happened again to cool the sincere love existing between us till death parted us which event took place some six years after the tale that I have here told you. Miss Vicars' conduct by some means or other became known to Mr. Wentworth, and she was left, and justly so, to the stings of her own conscience, he declaring

that "he would make no woman his wife who could be guilty of thus deliberately injuring a fellow-creature."

Now, my dear young friends, will not this true tale warn you of the danger of repeating anything falsely? You can by so doing merit nothing but the contempt of your fellow-creatures, which is nought in comparison with the just anger of God, who has declared that "the liar shall have his portion in the lake that burneth with brimstone and fire." We all know the evils which result from an unruly tongue. St. James calls it "a fire, a world of iniquity; it cannot be tamed, it is full of deadly poison." And here again I would remind you that when there is some truth mixed with falsehood, that is the worst of lies. See what the poet Tennyson says on this subject:—

"That a lie which is half a truth is ever the blackest of lies,  
That a lie which is all a lie may be met and fought with outright,  
But a lie which is part a truth is a harder matter to fight."

What will be the feelings of one who indulges in this sin when on her or his death-bed—when the recollection of the habit is brought fresh to their memories? Clever lies, little lies, or white lies as they are called, will then look what they really are—sins against the God of truth—sins which He has forbidden, and which He will surely punish.

The best lie that was ever invented, even if it delivered you from the greatest punishment a fellow-creature could inflict, will afford no satisfaction to remember, when the tongue that uttered it is stiffening in death.

Let us, then, all beware how we repeat things falsely. We may for a time succeed in injuring another, but it will be registered against us above, and bear witness at God's right hand. Yes, the envious tale "will its testimony bear, for us or against us



there," and sooner or later will bring us under the just condemnation of that law which forbids us to "bear false witness against our neighbour."

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## TENTH COMMANDMENT.

"THOU SHALT NOT COVET OTHER MEN'S GOODS."

We have now come to the consideration of the tenth and last commandment, in which we are forbidden to covet or desire anything that belongs to another. How often does this sin lead to crime! and how seldom does it fail in the end to bring misery and wretchedness on any person who indulges in it! One sin, my dear young friends, leads to another; and if we covet what cannot justly be ours, who can say where the desire is to end? How often do we read of daring robberies being committed, and sometimes blood spilt, for the satisfaction of such unbridled desires. When once they take possession of the mind, it leads to endless wants; nothing can satisfy its insatiable cravings. Let us, then, be content with what God gives us, and then we shall not fall into any snare spread by Satan, who delights in our footsteps straying from the path of rectitude.

I will now illustrate this commandment by a short sketch in the life of a young girl who lived as under-nurse with me, before I left my native shores to live in Canada.

Mary Eldred was just seventeen years of age when she entered my service to assist in the nursery; her mother, being a widow, with three other children to support, was only too glad

to let her eldest daughter go out to service. Mary was an exceedingly pretty girl, and unfortunately knew it ; consequently, her vanity was the first evil we had to contend against. A great portion of her time, which ought to have been devoted to the children, was spent at her looking-glass, and she was very much annoyed at not being allowed to spend her wages on beads and flowers and tawdry finery, instead of giving a portion to her hard-working mother.

Now, here I would pause a moment to remark upon the foolishness of some girls, who, instead of saving their earnings for useful purposes, expend them on useless finery—it is useless, because it does not answer any purpose for which it is intended. If, for instance, a girl wishes to appear like a lady, she will be disappointed, “for something more is wanted to complete that appearance than fine clothes.” By going out of our station we become objects of contempt, not by remaining in it, be that station ever so humble. Dressy girls are not aware how vulgar they look when decked out with flowers, feathers, brooches, earrings and necklaces. No lady cares to hire such a one, because she would naturally suppose that much time and money must be spent in acquiring such, and that she who is extravagant in her own concerns would not be very likely to be frugal with her mistress’s. How many a hard-working parent might be relieved by the sums spent in this manner by their vain and foolish girls, who, after all, seldom possess a comfortable undergarment or warm stockings to protect them from the cold.

I have, my dear young friends, seen so much harm result from this love of fine dress, that I feel there is no end to its evil effects when persisted in. I can assure you that it has been a source of the deepest anxiety, as well as trouble, to me in my Sabbath school class. I have seen the children whose

hats were adorned, or rather disfigured, by paltry feathers and gaudy flowers, shrug up their shoulders, turn up their noses, and whisper the unkind word, and refuse a seat next themselves to the one who had on nothing but a plain straw hat and brown holland slip. I had some years ago two girls in my class who had the misfortune to have no mother, and a good-for-nothing drunken father. They knew nothing but poverty and wretchedness at home; still they were always regular in their attendance, and the best behaved in the class. But they were poor, and always thinly and miserably clad. The elder of the two was particularly sensitive to the ridicule of her school-mates, and always shrunk from entering the pew in which the finely-dressed children sat. I suppose they must have made some complaint to their eldest sister who was at service, for, to my surprise, after two Sundays' absence, they appeared at school with their hats so completely smothered with bright pink flowers that it was almost impossible to tell of what material the hat itself was composed, and dresses, though flounced and trimmed, evidently made of some half-worn-out finery.

The smirk of satisfaction on the faces of these two little girls, as they looked round for admiration, was most painful to me to witness. I saw how ridiculous they had been made, and I felt sure that their duties would be entirely neglected, for all their thoughts would be concentrated on their unaccustomed finery. Of course, as might be expected, they did nothing but take off their hats to show their schoolfellows the flowers, whenever they could elude my observation. It was with deep regret that I felt that Sunday's hour was a lost one both to me and my scholars. But alas! the evil did not end there; the children were never again the quiet, attentive scholars they had been when clothed in their plain but clean apparel. The

love of finery had been inculcated, and nothing could convince them of their folly ; the sneers of their schoolmates at their poverty had been the cause of this evil, and all my admonitions on the subject fell on heedless ears.

How often has this insatiable desire for fine clothes led girls to step aside from the paths of virtue in order to procure them. Let me, then, affectionately exhort you all to pay less attention to the outward adorning of the frail body. Do not, during the short hour in your Sabbath school, waste time by thinking who is better dressed than yourself, nor grieve your pastor and teacher by turning a deaf ear to those instructions which are to fit you for eternity.

But to return to my story. Mary, fortunately for herself, had a very sensible mother, who would excuse no such folly in her daughter, and requested me to purchase her clothes, which I took care should be both neat and comfortable, and suitable to her wants rather than her wishes. Mary had most luxuriant soft brown hair, but she could not endure to have it confined under the neat cap always worn by English servants. She was scrupulously neat and clean in her person and habits ; but even this invaluable characteristic soured her temper, because if the little ones rumbled her clean apron, or baby's hands soiled her cap ribbon, she would give way to fits of sulky temper, very disagreeable for us to put up with ; but for the sake of her poor mother, I patiently tried to root out her vain and foolish propensities.

She had been with me six months, when another little baby being added to my household, I was necessarily absent some weeks from my nursery. I heard from my nurse that Mary had given a great deal of trouble to the upper nurse, who appeared to have no control over her since the eye of her mistress

had been withdrawn. She had formed an intimacy with the housemaid of a lady, who had filled her head with such a love of fine dress that she had foolishly contracted a debt of sixteen shillings in order to enable her to purchase some flimsy dress, which was both useless and unbecoming her station ; and although she had not gone quite so far as to discard her caps, she had trimmed them with gaudy ribbons, and allowed her hair to fall in ringlets over her neck. I immediately sent for her mother, who insisted upon Mary's hair being again braided up under her cap, or she threatened to cut it all off. Mary knew her mother too well to disobey, so after a great many silly arguments on her side, to which Mrs. Eldred paid no attention, she did so, and a neat calico dress was substituted for the flimsy fabric she had been wearing.

Although after this Mary did not fly into open rebellion, it was very plain to see that the sin of coveting any article of dress finer or better than her own was still the ruling passion of her nature ; but we gave her no opportunity of gratifying her silly taste.

But I had that year to contend with a far more serious trouble than any Mary was likely to give me. That fatal scourge, scarlet fever, was raging fearfully in the town during the summer ; the death bell was tolling from morn to eve, and hundreds of little ones fell victims to its ravages. Four of my little ones were attacked, and I must give Mary the credit to say that she for once forgot to think about her personal appearance in her earnest endeavours to nurse the little invalids. But how vain was all our care ! Ten days of intense anxiety passed away, and three of the little sufferers were released from pain, twenty-four hours only elapsing from the death of the first when the two others joined their sainted brother in that bright sphere where



they now form a part of that happy band of children whose sins are all forgiven, and who stand around our Saviour's throne.

When I went into my nursery and saw the three little coffins stand side by side, I thought I could never be happy again. I could scarcely be persuaded to listen to one word of comfort, and thought my good nurse heartless and cruel when she told me that "perhaps the day was not far distant when I should thank God for taking them." I have lived to see that day, though then it seemed so far away. I know now how sinful I was—how selfish was my grief; for was not my loss their eternal gain? But I rebelled against the fiat which had rendered my home so desolate, for my twin girls had died some two years before. But my cup of sorrow was not yet drank to the dregs, for the sods were scarcely placed on the grave ere it was again opened to receive the remains of my infant: thus in a few short days the grave closed over my darlings, for only one survived the fatal fever. Many were the homes as desolate as mine; the emphatic words of holy writ might well be used to describe the grief of that fever-stricken town—"For there was heard lamentation, and weeping and great mourning; Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted because they are not."

How my heart clung to my sole surviving child you may well believe, and how earnestly I prayed that God would spare me him. He was spared to be my comfort until fifteen years of age, when, as I told you when considering the sixth commandment, he was killed by a blow given him at school. My dear young friends, we are poor judges of what is good for us. Had the little fellow followed his brothers and sisters to the grave then, sad as it would have been, the anguish and bitterness of that hour in the future would have been spared me. Could I have then withdrawn the veil, how should I have shrank from the con-

temptation of enduring so much misery. My rebellious spirit fought against the Divine decree which had deprived me of all the little loving faces at one blow, forgetting in my anguish the exceeding weight of glory they were so early called upon to enjoy.

But you will be anxious to hear what became of Mary. She was, poor girl, after the death of the children, herself attacked with the fever; she recovered, but became so petulant and disagreeable, always lamenting the loss of her hair (which had been cut off during her delirium), instead of being grateful for the life spared when she had been in the midst of death. Of course I had now no further occasion for her services, and as I was leaving town for the benefit of my little boy's health, which was much impaired by his late illness, I thought it best to send her home to her mother. During my absence Mary obtained a place in the city of N——, the very worst situation she could have been placed in, as the mistress took little heed of the character of her servants provided their work was done. It was all eye-service with her domestics; they cared little how their duties were performed as long as they escaped a scolding. No restriction was laid on their manner of dressing, so Mary was exposed to every temptation which could lead to the indulgence of her besetting sin. She soon fell back into her old habits; there was no kindly warning to restrain her passion for purchasing what she coveted, and which her wages did not warrant.

Upon my return home, her broken-hearted mother called to tell me that Mary was in prison for theft, and besought me so earnestly to go and speak for her on her trial, that I could not refuse, for I had never known her to be dishonest—only silly and vain. It appeared that her mistress had missed some very valuable jewels, and that they had been found in Mary's box, who had

no excuse to offer only that she had borrowed them to wear at a party, and meant to have put them back. She pleaded hard for mercy, but her mistress was too indignant to listen to her pleadings, and she had her sent to prison.

Her trial took place, but in consideration of her previous good character she was sentenced to only three months' imprisonment. The look of shame and agony on poor Mary's face, as the judge passed sentence, was most pitiful to behold, and I could scarcely help wishing it passed on her careless mistress, who had taken no pains to guard Mary from the temptation which her own slothful habits left open to her servants. However, time passed away, as time will do with the miserable as well as with the happy, and Mary returned to her mother's house. As she seemed very penitent, great kindness was shown her by the ladies of the town, who gave her plenty of employment for her needle. In a year's time Mary was married to a very respectable mechanic, and we all hoped that she would now be cured of her folly ; but as soon as the ever-watchful eye of her mother was removed, Mary began to show symptoms that the evil was very far from being eradicated. For some time after their marriage, John Benson would bring home his wages and give them to Mary to provide for the wants of the household. He had furnished his cottage with everything necessary for her comfort, but she began to covet articles which were very much out of place in her home, and for which she had not the slightest occasion. Benson was a steady, hard-working man, willing to give his young wife every comfort necessary for her, but he could not patiently brook seeing his hard earnings frittered away in obtaining useless luxuries for which there was no need, and which he scarcely knew the use of ; while he himself was deprived of comforts which his wages fully justified him in procuring.

I never could lose my interest in Mary, and used to visit her frequently, and was too often a witness of the disputes between her husband and herself upon her sinful and lavish waste of money, which he wanted laid up against a rainy day. Nothing could persuade Mary that it was really dishonest to spend her husband's wages in beautifying her person and cottage ; she would not listen, and I am sure you will not be surprised to hear that her wicked persistence in her folly at last worked her complete ruin.

A lady driving from the town one day was thrown from her carriage so close to Mary's cottage that she was taken in there till a doctor could be sent for. As the lady resided some ten miles distant from the place where the accident happened, and being badly hurt, besides severely fracturing one of her arms, the doctor would not hear of her removal. Everything that could add to her comfort was procured, and Mary, assisted by her mother, nursed her kindly and tenderly.

The lady was not removed home for a month, and Mary received a very handsome remuneration for her trouble from the husband of the invalid.

A few days after she had left I received a note from her, in which she lamented the loss of a very handsome chain and locket, which, being a family relic, she was extremely annoyed at losing. She expressed her conviction that she had them on when carried into Mary's cottage, and requested me in the most courteous manner to walk over and ask if they had been left there, adding that, supposing they were in her trunk, she had never thought of looking on the morning of her departure.

The moment I read this letter I felt sure Mary was the culprit ; however, I walked over to Mary's and read her the letter. She turned very pale, but positively denied ever having seen



the articles, and was very indignant at being suspected ; but she did not look like an innocent person, and displayed too much temper in her protestations to induce belief. I insisted on being allowed to examine her drawers, boxes, etc., which at first she resolutely refused, but upon threatening a search-warrant she consented. I found nothing but a night-dress of Mrs. Vincent's, which Mary declared she had given her, and as I had no authority to look for anything but the jewels, I did not consider myself justified in taking it, although it strengthened my suspicions about the more valuable articles.

I wrote to Mrs. Vincent, telling her of the non-success of my errand, and thought it right to mention the affair of the night-dress, not putting any faith in Mary's assertion that Mrs. Vincent had given it to her. The next day a search-warrant was issued by Mr. Vincent, as his wife was so confident about having the articles on at the time of the accident. However, nothing but the night-dress was there to criminate Mary, and the matter dropped. A few weeks after the affair had ceased to interest the gossip-loving portion of the town, the missing articles were found at a pawnbroker's in the City of N——, by a policeman who had been on the watch ever since.

The pawnbroker immediately identified Mary as the person who had sold them to him, and thus her career of sin and folly was brought to a crisis. Had she given up the articles, Mr. Vincent, in consideration of her kind nursing of his wife, would have allowed the matter to die out without giving it publicity, but now he had no alternative but to prosecute ; and Mary was hurried from her pretty, comfortable cottage, again to become the inmate of a prison.

Counsel was employed and everything done by her friends



and relatives to help her in her hour of shame and wretchedness, but the circumstances of trust in which Mrs. Vincent's illness had placed her, and her former conviction, operated so strongly on the mind of the Judge, that he sentenced her to fourteen years' transportation.

I might lengthen out this tale by telling you of the husband's and mother's agony, as the poor girl was borne out of court in a fainting state, never to return to her home, where she might have been so happy, until the brand of the convict was stamped on her pretty brow. But such is not my intention ; I merely desire, in the sequel of this tale, to point out the danger all incur who indulge in the sin of coveting their neighbours, goods. It but too frequently ends in ruin. Had Mary not coveted what she had no legitimate means of procuring—had she been content with the many comforts suitable to her station, she would not thus have steeped her soul in guilt, or bowed down with such bitter shame the honest heads of her husband and mother.

We have now come to the conclusion of the consideration of the Ten Commandments as read in our Church every Sabbath, and to which is annexed the petition, " Lord have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law." My dear young friends, I have heard girls and boys remark, when reading some pretty tale from their Sabbath school library : " Ah ! it is all very well in books for a person to be so good, or so wicked, but I do not believe it is true." This was my reason for composing these tales from scenes in which I have myself been a witness ; they are not invented for the purpose of instructing, but in reality did happen. Many of the characters are living still, and should this little work ever meet their eyes, would, I feel sure, willingly give their testimony to its truth.

You will, in reading it, on one hand see the certain end of evil courses, and on the other discern all the benefit of good example. Every one of you in your Sabbath school can do an immense deal of good, or evil, according to the example you set others ; the conduct of the youngest child will have its effect. Let neither girl or boy think they have no influence ; your example in that one short hour of idling and inattention ; may have a most baneful effect on the whole school. Let us, then, pray that God may so bless us all, both scholars and teachers, with the rich knowledge of Himself, and enable us so to restrain all our evil passions, that we shall fear to break one of the least of the commandments, for in so doing we come under the ban of our Saviour's declaration, that " we are guilty of all."

After the Commandments are read, follows a prayer for Church and State, the Collect appointed for the day, the Epistle, Gospel and Creed. This concludes the Liturgy, or Public Form of Prayer appointed for our Church service. A sermon is then preached by the minister, which, unless it is Communion Sunday, ends the morning service.

Here I would say a few words on the most beautiful part of our Church Liturgy. Too many young people stay away from the Lord's table, and many are the excuses made. Some say, "I know, if I took the Sacrament, that I could not enjoy myself ; I could not go to parties and be merry." What a mistaken idea is this. Of course Christians would be always careful into what company they went ; but, believe me, their religion will never curtail your legitimate pleasures, or prevent your full enjoyment of them. Others say, "I am not good enough ; I should be afraid." I would ask this question, "If you are not good enough to kneel there, are you good enough to die ?" Who can tell

when that hour may come? If we wait till we are fit, we should never kneel there. If we really feel ourselves unworthy to partake of these holy mysteries, it is the very state of mind in which we are invited to come; if we were free from sin, there would be no need to go; our very confession "that we are not worthy so much as to gather up the crumbs under His table," is a sufficient plea to Him who commanded us "to do this in remembrance of Him."

Think, my dear young friends, how little these excuses will avail us at the last. Remember, those who refused the Gospel feast were counted unworthy of the heavenly one. Let us all, then, beware how we slight the offered mercy. Our clergy exhort us to come and partake of this supper; they love to see a full table; and if we all draw near with faith, feeling our own unworthiness, do not doubt but that we shall be received by Him who shed His blood for our redemption, and who Himself declares that "He came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."

As you all possess a Prayer Book, you will see that there are special services for both public and private baptism, for infants and adults, for the solemnization of matrimony, the visitation of the sick, and burial of the dead. But as our regular Sabbath services is what I have especially desired to call your attention to, I need not particularize them here, as of course they are only required on special occasions.

And now, my dear young friends, in conclusion, I have only a few words more to say. When our minister pronounces the blessing, praying that "the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, may keep our hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God, and of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, and that the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son

and the Holy Ghost, may be amongst us, and remain with us always," do you not think that a few minutes on our knees is due to God, in which we may thank Him for the opportunity we have enjoyed of attending His public service—one we may never have again? But it always seems to me that the words are scarcely said when a rush is made for the door, as though the holy sanctuary could not be left too soon. Should we go out of the house of God as out of any place of public amusement? Let us not by such conduct show how ungrateful we are for the opportunities which are denied to many, but let us enter the courts of God's house with humble and contrite spirits, and leave it with reverence and godly fear, thanking God for the inestimable privilege we have enjoyed of being allowed to worship there. Then we may all feel and exclaim with David, "I was glad when they said unto me, we will go into the house of the Lord."

I will now proceed to the Scripture verses, as chosen by my pupils for illustration, from the various scenes and characters with which I had been familiar. I will commence with one which, being too late for publication, did not appear in the first series—the subject being,

### "FEED MY LAMBS."

This command of our blessed Saviour, St. John tells us, was addressed to Simon Peter, the son of Jonas. We are told in this Gospel that He had shown himself three times to His disciples after He had arisen from the dead, and that He was dining with them when He addressed Peter in the following manner: "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me more than these?" The answer was, "Yea, Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee." Our Saviour then commanded him "To feed His



lambs.” Three times He addressed him in the same manner, received the same answer, and gave the same command. It would seem that Peter felt grieved when asked the third time, for he answered more vehemently than before “Lord, Thou knowest all things ; Thou knowest that I love Thee.”

You all know that Peter had denied his Master three times. This very probably accounts for our Saviour addressing him three times in the same words ; and, perhaps, the remembrance of his great sin made Peter feel so grieved as he answered the Lord. How sad he must have felt when he looked back to that time when he had so urgently denied being one of His disciples, feeling how little faith was to be placed in his present avowal. If you refer to the event as related by St. Matthew, you will find that he thus speaks to Jesus: “Though all men shall be offended because of Thee, yet will I never be offended ;” and in a short time after he, with an oath, denied any knowledge of one for whom he had professed such exceeding great love. Deep as his penitence was, it could never efface from his memory the base ingratitude of which he had been guilty, and, doubtless, the remembrance of this was a bitter sting to Peter, as our Saviour addressed him three different times in these words—“Feed my lambs.”

This command addressed to Peter is applicable to us all. We can all do something, use some influence, in bringing little children into the fold of the Great Shepherd. Here let me impress on your minds the inestimable privilege you enjoy in your Sabbath school. Every Sunday a portion of Scripture is both read and committed to memory, in which some event in the life of our blessed Saviour is fully set before you as an example to imitate ; and surely if you do not through the year gain a large amount of scriptural knowledge, it must be laid to



your own lack of interested attention rather than to any fault of your minister or teachers.

You are all reasonable beings, able to choose the good or shun the evil. As we all sow, so must we reap. Many are the opportunities given you, and, in consequence, great are your responsibilities. That God will require all to answer for mis-spent time, we know to be a solemn truth, and one which calls for our most earnest attention.

Now, in order to make this subject interesting to you, I propose to relate a short tale of a young girl, who, being early impressed with the feeling that God required her to make use of the opportunities she enjoyed, set herself diligently to work while it was yet day, for she knew that the night cometh when no man can work. She was only three years of age when it pleased God to deprive her of her father, before she was able to benefit by his Christian instruction. Since his death her mother had lived very retired, in a beautiful cottage by the sea, devoting herself to the education of her little Hilda, whom she brought up in the fear and love of God.

When I first knew Hilda, she was within three months of attaining her fourteenth year. She was a gentle, loving creature, with most winning ways. It seemed impossible for her to act in either a rude or vulgar manner—a sure indication of Christian grace. The life of our Saviour seemed to impress her youthful mind with the most earnest desire to follow in His holy footsteps. The meekness and humility with which He bore all His sufferings, sunk deep into her heart, rendering her a willing, obedient child. As she sat reading her Bible she would follow with her mind's eye the Saviour from His cradle to the grave, causing her young heart to burn with the most ardent desire to bring some lambs to His fold.

During some weeks' residence at the sea-side I became acquainted with Hilda and her mother, and recollect attending Divine service one Sunday, when the text chosen by the minister was our Saviour's command to Peter, to “feed His lambs,” and it again formed the subject of his lecture to the children in the afternoon, in their Sabbath school. No one could look on Hilda's earnest face without being struck with the eager desire thereon expressed of being herself identified with the subject ; drinking in with delight the idea, acknowledged as yet only to herself, that she might be made the instrument in God's hands of bringing some stray lamb into the fold of Christ.

As we were returning from the school, Mrs. Darville invited me so cordially to share her evening meal that I did so, and an intimacy sprung up between us which only ended with her life. Hilda that evening spoke of the feelings which had so long taken possession of her mind—her longing to try and do some good amongst the fishermen's children, who spent all their time running up and down the steep cliffs, and gathering shells and seaweed which they sold to the ladies who resorted to this place during the hot summer months. It seemed so sad to Hilda that the Sabbath school instructions should not outlive the Sabbath afternoon ; that they should with these wild untaught children be as fleeting as the shadows ; and she begged in her sweet persuasive manner that her mother would allow her to go amongst them during the weekly afternoons to try to bring them to think more seriously of those truths taught them every Sabbath. Mrs. Darville gave her permission, provided she neglected no duties of her own, and many were the opportunities I enjoyed of watching Hilda sitting amongst her wild pupils, whilst she taught them in her own earnest, simple manner of Christ their Saviour.

Many were the hindrances encountered by Hilda in her good work, but she never flagged in the performance of her self-imposed task. How many older persons would have given up rather than battle with difficulties which seemed insurmountable. But Hilda looked on these poor little ignorant children as lambs to be brought into the fold, and earnestly did she pray for strength to enable her to persevere in her labour of love.

It was a few days before my return home, that, Hilda having attained her fourteenth year, I was anxious to present her with a small gift, and I walked to the cottage for the double purpose of presenting it to her and bidding her farewell. When I arrived, I was distressed to see the little girl in an agony of tears, while her mother was trying to fasten on her cloak and hat. A boy stood by her side urging her to be quick, and from his incoherent tale I learned that one of Hilda's pupils, in her search for some peculiar flower growing on the cliffs, had ventured too near the edge, and had been precipitated with great violence to its base. Being severely injured, she had sent her brother to request the presence of her young teacher. Hilda struggled to compose herself, and I, at her mother's request, accompanied her to the poor home of the sufferer. We were immediately taken into the room, where, on a pallet bed, lay the invalid, a girl apparently about eleven or twelve years of age. Her moans were fearful to hear, as she vainly struggled against the approach of the King of Terrors. All was confusion in the cot ; the poor mother was crying hysterically, while the younger children stood around, awe-struck with the knowledge that Mary was to die, and go where they could see her no more. The doctor left as we entered, but whispered to me that there

was no hope—some very severe internal injury was fast bearing her away from her earthly home.

The first words uttered by the poor girl when she became conscious of Hilda's presence were almost screamed out—"Oh ! Miss Hilda, come here and tell me can I go to heaven ? Oh ! why did I not think more of Jesus ? But I never thought of dying ; and yet," continued the poor girl in a fainter tone of voice, "I have thought a great deal more about what you have taught me than you will believe. I have not felt so idle, nor so cross to my brothers and sisters as I used to be. I know I have been a sad, naughty girl, and given poor mother a good deal of trouble, but I feel such sorrow for it all now. Won't you kneel and ask Jesus to forgive me ?" Hilda was almost choked with emotion as the poor mother told her how much of her gentle influence had dwelt in her cottage home. Mary used to be so rude and idle, but since Miss Hilda had taught her, she had been altogether a different girl. Here the poor woman burst into fresh tears, as she blessed the young teacher, whose heart leaped for joy as she thus saw the first fruits of her earnest teaching. Here was one of the little stray lambs she had tried to bring into the fold, expressing her sorrow for her past sins, and imploring pardon. Most beautifully in her simple trusting faith did Hilda assure the dying girl that her sins were washed clean in the blood of the Lamb slain to take away the sins of the world ; that all that was required of her was to believe and trust in this great and wondrous truth.

"I feel happy now, Miss Hilda," said the little girl, after some minutes of perfect silence. "I believe Jesus is going to take me ; will you kiss me, and let me thank you for all your care for me ? Don't forget me, dear Miss Hilda, when I am dead ; put some pretty flowers on my grave, and perhaps I

shall hear the sound of your feet when you walk near me. Sing to me, dear. It is getting so dark I cannot see." Hilda bent down to kiss the child, her warm tears falling on the face on which the shades of death were gathering ; but she whispered loving words of her Saviour into the fast deafening ear as she wiped the death damps from off her brow.

The sun was just setting ; its bright beams gilding the lattice window seemed to play as a halo around the head of the dying girl. Her eyes opened, and a smile of inexpressible beauty parted her pale lips as she whispered, "Oh, mother, let me go !" That was all, and her spirit stood in the presence of her Maker.

Mrs. Darville most kindly sent every assistance to the poor broken-hearted mother, and paid all the funeral expenses. Mary was borne by six of her playmates, among whom a few days before she had been the merriest, to the pretty churchyard, and laid to rest under the shade of the beautiful elms, and from whence the soft murmuring of the distant waves made sweet music for Hilda as she sat many a day after by the side of the little grave, and where she, with the minister's permission, gathered her young flock and drew her simple lessons from this sad event.

I continued my visits every summer till Hilda attained her seventeenth year, and found each succeeding one bearing on its bosom fresh fruit of Hilda's loving care for her little flock. But now the hour was at hand when she was to drink her first cup of sorrow. Her mother, her beloved companion, her patient monitor, her consoler and guide, was to be taken away. "The place that had known her was to know her no more." Mrs. Darville had been attacked with severe inflammation of the lungs two years previous, and had been exceedingly delicate



ever since. The spring before her death had renewed the attack with double severity, confining her to the house for months, and when I arrived I found her calmly awaiting the approach of what she felt was inevitable. This was a fearful blow to Hilda, although she could scarcely realize the desolate future conveyed by its sad knowledge. It was a melancholy time I spent that summer, and yet it had its seasons of happiness, for no one could be with Mrs. Darville without learning lessons of faith which could not fail to bring their own peace.

At Hilda's earnest desire I spent most of my time at Elm Cottage, taking lodgings in its near vicinity. I had been spending Saturday afternoon as usual, and had left Mrs. Darville much the same, apprehending no immediate change, when I was aroused at midnight by Hilda's summons to come quickly. I found that Mrs. Darville had burst a blood-vessel, and life was fast ebbing away. She survived, however, till the glorious orb of day was gilding all around. The majestic elms were flooded with its golden light; the birds warbled their matin songs among the branches which overshadowed the window of the room in which we were sitting—keeping our sad watch—waiting the moment when the ransomed soul should take its flight to realms of everlasting day. It seemed as if death could have no place in that bright scene; and yet its marble seal was on the brow; its damps upon the pallid face. No words were spoken, no tears were shed—grief too deep for tears was there. I could only recall to memory the death scene at which I had been present four years previous. There, Hilda had been the comforter; now the shaft had fallen on her own happy home, and her young heart was almost broken; yet she could not sorrow as one without hope, for she well knew that to her be-

loved mother death would be only the unfolding of the glories of heaven. She had fought the good fight, her course was run, and she knew that the crown of everlasting life was awaiting her. Poor girl ! she could not raise her eyes to gaze on the last sad change, but knelt by the bedside with the cold hand of her mother pressed to her lips till its fond grasp relaxed, and Hilda knew that all was over ; that the spirit had deserted its frail tenement, and she stood alone.

It is useless to linger on this scene. Hilda felt that her sainted mother would desire no violent demonstration of her heart-felt grief, so she bore up after the first shock was over, and listened eagerly to her beloved minister as he portrayed the glories of the heavenly Sabbath on which her mother had entered. The grief of the rude inhabitants for the gentle lady of Elm Cottage must have been gratifying to Hilda, as they strove to show their sympathy with her sorrow. She had always entered into all their joys and griefs, and alleviated their troubles to the utmost of her power. She identified herself so much with them that her sorrow was theirs also.

It was a most affecting scene, on the day of Mrs. Darville's funeral, to see the children standing in groups at a short distance from the grave, and bursting forth at the conclusion of the ceremony with their untutored voices in a wild and beautiful melody, singing—

“ There is a happy land, far, far away.”

No choir of finished singers ever made me thrill with such a feeling of ecstasy as that simple hymn, sung at the grave by those untaught children of nature.

Hilda remained at her cottage home, according to the terms of the will, and Miss Fleudar, a maiden aunt of her mother's, was requested to come and reside with her. It pleased God to

try Hilda greatly. Her aunt was very averse to all her long-cherished plans about her young flock, and placed every obstacle in her way. Hilda felt that her aunt possessed no legal right to interfere, still she was unwilling to disobey, but endeavoured by every means to prove to her, that having once put her hand to the plough, it would not be right to turn back ; but Miss Fleudar was of this world, and could not appreciate the pure motives which actuated Hilda to spend so much time amongst these children, who shrank with undisguised dismay from the stern and haughty lady who now dwelt in Hilda's home. She, poor girl, prayed earnestly to be guided in the right way ; she felt it would be sinful to desert the little ones after having so long been their guide and instructress ; she loved them all, rude and wild as they were, and they loved her so well, that her presence would at any time check the angry word when she came amongst them. Her disposition was naturally yielding, but she would not give up when once convinced she was right ; she therefore told her aunt, that “ as she commenced and continued this work under her sainted mother's direction and approval, she felt that her arguments were not of sufficient weight to induce her to abandon a work in which she was so interested :” at the same time she promised that she would not allow it to interfere in any way with her aunt's comfort, but would rather seek to make her a convert to the inestimable benefit of the work she had followed for so many years, and requested her, in her pretty pleading manner, to join her in her rambles among her little flock.

Miss Fleudar could not be insensible to her young niece's amiable character, but gave way with very bad grace, and resolutely refused to aid her in what she termed her romantic scheme. Hilda took no notice of her aunt's constant and bitter

taunts ; she was always gentle and obedient ; but the peace of home had departed, and to dwell with constant bickerings is enough to wear out the most patient spirit. But Hilda was not one who expected her path through life to be all sunshine ; she did not fret and fume because everything was not made smooth for her, but went steadily on in the path she had chosen, and God blessed her work by bringing many little lambs into the true fold.

Two years after her mother's death, the good old minister was called to his reward, but not before he had his most cherished wish gratified—that of seeing Hilda the wife of his only son, who succeeded to the living ; and there in the pretty parsonage she still resides. She has many little ones of her own, while of the children she taught, many have died in the faith of Christ, while others are playing their part on the stage of life.

Will not this tale, my dear young friends, encourage you to follow so good an example ? Not a day passes, at home or abroad, that you cannot do some little deed of kindness—add your mite to the general good. Deem no act too small which can add one iota to the comfort or happiness of another. Remember our blessed Saviour's promise, that “a cup of cold water given for His name's sake shall find its reward.”

Should these pages ever meet Hilda's eye, she will find how gladly I give her to you as an example to imitate. Her filial obedience, her untiring efforts to do good, and her kind and amiable manners, are well worth striving for. A kind disposition, my dear young friends, is its own reward, for conscience whispers that it spreads happiness around you. What can be so galling as to receive any act of kindness when given in a grudging spirit ? Some will act in such a disagreeable way



that it cancels the kindness, while others are so pleasant and kind in manner that it is sweet to receive a favour at their hands. Some young girls have that exceedingly disagreeable habit of sneering and tossing their heads when reproved by their Sabbath school teachers. Now, can anything be more ridiculous? It is not at all likely that the teacher cares for so silly a way of showing temper, as far as herself is concerned; she can only feel sorrow for the girl, who hurts herself a great deal more, because she cannot retain either the love or respect of her instructress. I hear so many young people frequently make use of the expression, “What do I care for what our teacher thinks?” Well, you should care, as we all should, of what people think of our conduct. Is it not far more pleasant to know ourselves liked than disliked?—though this question is certainly doubtful if we judge by the pains so many young people take to be disagreeable in manner and impertinent of speech to their elders and superiors. “Who are my betters?” I was once asked by one of my pupils in the Sabbath school, some years since, as she was repeating that part of the Church Catechism which bids us “to order ourselves lowly and reverently to all our betters.” Did not the question prove the ignorance by which it was dictated? A very prevalent idea among young people is, that by being respectful to their elders and teachers, that they are lowering their dignity, and causing the objects of their courtesy to fancy that they do so because they acknowledge their superiority. What a silly idea! Every person is entitled to respect unless they have themselves lost claim to it, and a rude impertinent manner causes you to lose the dignity you pride yourself on.

A girl once came to me to dictate for her a letter to her late mistress, asking for a character; in ending it, I signed it “Yours



respectfully." Well, the girl refused to let it go ; "she was not going to make so little of herself as to use that word." In vain I told her it was the proper one to use : she was asking a favour ; the lady, with whom she was most anxious to live, had refused to take her without a character from her late mistress ; and yet this silly girl actually lost a good place, simply because she would not allow the word "respectfully" to be used, as I of course refused to substitute any other. "If I am poor I am proud" is another expression in such constant use. It is very certain that they miscall the word. Any one ought to be too proud to disgrace themselves, or be saucy, rude and impertinent ; for those qualities arise from ignorance, not pride, and any one who indulges in such habits will find themselves sooner or later objects of contempt to all classes. Let us then all try to cultivate a kind spirit. Gentle words cost nothing, but diffuse happiness around. Let us remember the example set us by our Saviour in His great humility ; think of all the loving words He spoke to the erring sinner ; how He healed all their infirmities and forgave their sins. And let me also entreat you to remember, that when your minister gathers you all together in your Sabbath school, he is following out our Saviour's command to Peter, to "feed His lambs."

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*"Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them."—Ecclesiastes, xii. 1.*

This beautiful verse forms a portion of the last chapter of the book of Ecclesiastes, which abounds in texts clothed in the

chaste language of Scripture ; and I trust, in the tale I am about to make use of in order to illustrate this verse, that I may be enabled to prove to you the happiness all enjoy who follow the precept contained in it. It is a short history of one of my own cousins which I have chosen, and may you in the contemplation of it be led to follow her example, who, although surrounded with every luxury which could render this world's pleasures tempting, yet, like Mary, chose that better part which is never taken away.

Ellen Clifford was the eldest child of my uncle and aunt, who resided in a most beautiful place in the county of N——. Sir Anthony Clifford was very rich, but a pompous, purse-proud, disagreeable man. When he married my aunt, she was a gay, young, thoughtless creature, possessing beauty enough to have won the heart of the most fastidious ; but she knew nothing of his character, which was one ill-calculated to render her happy. In a very short time the gay-hearted girl sank into the poor, desponding, meek-spirited woman, afraid of her husband's voice, and actually not daring to exert any will of her own. I do not remember anything very distinctly of the character of my aunt, for when I used to stay there, I was always in the school-room with my cousins, who were all educated at home, and under the entire control of a very strict governess. Now, here I would just pause to impress on your minds the privileges you all possess of being so much more under the watchful eye of a mother than was the fashion in those days. Education, also, was then a toil ; knowledge was ground into children, and the governess was far oftener chosen for the severity of her discipline than for either her talents or amiability. It was, indeed, a fearful mistake, and many a mother has had cause to rue the system. I am the more con-

vinced every day, that so much more is accomplished by kindness than severity, that I would not trust the education of my children to any one they feared ; experience has taught me that it has a most baneful influence on the pupil. I recollect we used to be confined to the school-room from seven a. m. till eight p. m., poring over studies we could not comprehend, and listening to the harsh threatenings of punishment, which we knew there was no escape from when once determined on by our harsh governess. If asked to spend a few weeks with our cousins, it was expected that we should share a portion of their studies during our visit. All, therefore, that I remember of my aunt is, that she was exceedingly kind in manner to the young people, but she was so subject to low nervous prostration, that she could not endure the slightest noise. Then, we were required by the governess to be the very pinks of propriety, which I, for one, never could or did attain to ; and many were the severe lectures I used to receive for my torn dresses and tangled curls, the natural consequence of clambering into places in which I had no business. Of my cousins I have little to say—ther were all merry, good-natured girls, but kept under such restraint by a very severe governess, that when they could manage to escape from the thralldom which surrounded them, they were guilty of every extravagance, and would resort to any means to escape detection.

Ellen, however, their senior by many years, was a girl of altogether a different character ; her mother had during her infancy been so exceedingly ill, that Ellen had been placed out at nurse, and had imbibed all the religious principles of the very excellent woman who had had the care of her. Although Mrs. Parker was only a cottager's wife, she was a most noble woman and pure Christian. Most earnestly did she seek to en-

graft on her nursling's heart the all-important necessity of “remembering her Creator in the days of her youth.” God blessed the good seed sown, for Ellen was always a very thoughtful child, and gifted with a mind on which a good impression was easily made. I could not but admire my cousin Ellen's character, although I was altogether too full of life and spirits not to prefer being with my other cousins, who were always ready for a game of play ; but I must own that they often shocked me with their deceitful tricks to escape the punishment which they dreaded. I do not mean to say that I was guileless from principle, because *now* I feel sure no such pure feeling guided me. It was fear kept me from telling the ready falsehood, for I well knew the punishment which would be inflicted if I, by chance, should be found out. I understood little of Ellen's beautiful character until her mother died. I happened to be staying there at the time it took place, having been invited to accompany my mother to the christening of my infant cousin, as she was to be called Fanny, after me. It was not more than a year after the sudden death of the young boy, whose fate I made use of to illustrate the third commandment, and my mind never having quite recovered from that awful shock, it was, perhaps, in a fitter state to receive religious impressions. Ellen was about this time nineteen years of age, and it was during this season of affliction that her Christian character shone forth in all its purity and loveliness.

Sir Anthony felt a little softened when he was called upon to take his last farewell of his wife. I think I see him now, with his pompous, overbearing pride, trying to stifle every manly feeling as too vulgar to be indulged in, forming a strange contrast to the violent sobs and tears of his distressed children. I never could quite believe that my aunt died



happy ; whatever her husband's faults had been, it formed no excuse for the inanimate useless life into which she sunk, leaving the guidance of her children to servants and governesses, who, whatever might have been their individual merits, took little pains to teach them their duty to God—their obedience proceeded from fear, and not from the principle which ought to have been their guiding star. Lady Clifford's death was sudden, and in the midst of the christening festivities ; therefore I felt how short a time had been granted her for repentance. But no one has a right to set a bound to that mercy which, we are all taught to believe, may even be found in the eleventh hour.

Ellen sat up all night with me after my aunt's death, and talked so long and earnestly of the compassionate love of our Divine Redeemer, that hard, indeed, must have been the heart which could have remained untouched by her gentle influence ; and during my stay I took more delight in her society and that of her beloved nurse, who had flown to speak words of comfort to the sorrow-stricken girl.

A year had scarcely elapsed, after the death of my aunt, ere Sir Anthony brought home a young girl not out of her teens, as his wife. I recollect how I pitied my cousins when I heard this, for I entertained a childish horror of a step-mother, and expected to find them all very miserable when I accompanied my parents on their first visit to her. What was my astonishment, to find them perfectly enchanted with their step-mother. She evidently exerted the greatest influence over her father-like husband, who seemed now to be ruled instead of ruling. She had insisted, upon her arrival, that the girls should be entirely emancipated, during the summer, from the rigours of



the school-room, and the overtasked governess sent home for a few months' recreation.

Being young and exceedingly pretty, she was more like a sister than mother to my cousins ; she entered with the avidity of a child into all their amusements, and her cheerful temper made perpetual sunshine in a house where gloom had so long reigned supreme. I was quite fascinated with the courteous manner in which she received my parents ; such lady-like deference was accorded them, such a smiling face bid me welcome, that, before I went to bed that night, I had pronounced her the most charming of women.

The hall was now a different place—all was gaiety and life ; dinner and evening parties, pic-nics, boating excursions, followed each other with rapidity, nor were any of my cousins debarred from the full enjoyment of them, unless by their own desire. Ellen, of course, was the only one who ventured to disapprove of this change ; not but that she was glad to see her sisters emancipated from a system which she felt to be so injurious—for no one disliked severity like the gentle Ellen—but she feared that the rein was being pulled too much the other way, and lamented to me in the most mournful manner, that the necessity of so much company on the Sabbath day should prevent its sacred duties from being fulfilled. “Dear mamma,” she would say, “is so kind and indulgent ; but oh, if she would spend half the time devoted to the frivolous round of pleasure in the service of God, I should think her almost perfect, for she is so kind to us motherless girls ; but the voice of prayer is never heard in our household—can the blessing of God rest upon us ?” I used to think it surely would descend on her for she was so self-sacrificing, so amiable, so willing to shut her eyes to all her own perfections and open them to those of an-

other, that all who loved not religion could not but acknowledge the superiority of her, whose every action was guided by its pure principles.

I spent a very happy fortnight at B—— Hall, although I was not permitted to join in the festivities with the same freedom as my cousins, nor did I desire it, for I had become greatly attached to my cousin Ellen, who took infinite pains to turn my thoughts from the frivolous things of time to the more precious and lasting ones of eternity, and I parted from her with great regret, she refusing my dear mother's invitation to accompany us home, as she devoted most of her time to her infant sister Fanny.

Ellen was a remarkably pretty and graceful-looking girl, and about six months after our departure, her hand was asked in marriage by the rector of the parish, a most delightful man, and one well able to appreciate the noble character of my cousin Ellen. Lady Clifford quite won Ellen's heart by the kindness with which she urged Sir Anthony's consent to this match, he being very unwilling to give it, thinking with his usual pompous pride that his daughter was fitted for a more exalted station. But Lady Clifford overruled all his objections, and insisted upon his giving Ellen five thousand pounds with his consent, and was herself the bearer of the glad tidings to the blushing girl, whose beautiful Christian character she could not but love, however unwilling she might be to follow the example it set her.

As there existed no reason for delay, the wedding was fixed to take place early in the following summer, and I received a most cordial invitation from Lady Clifford to act as one of the bridesmaids. But, alas! how uncertain is everything in this life! how often are the best laid plans frustrated, and sometimes

when we feelmost secure of their fulfilment ! Lady Clifford had been very delicate all winter, and soon after the birth of a son, became so seriously ill as to create the greatest alarm in her family. A celebrated physician was immediately summoned from London, and their worst fears were confirmed by his pronouncing her disease cancer in its most painful form. Here it was again that Ellen's Christian character was brought out. Putting aside all preparations for her wedding without a murmur, she took her post in the sick chamber of her step-mother. She bore meekly all the vain repinings of the poor, fretful invalid, who had never yet been called upon to pass through the ordeal of sickness. Now it was that Ellen earnestly sought by day and by night to turn her thoughts to that world whence she was fast hastening. With tireless zeal did she supplicate at the throne of grace for the poor sufferer, and that Divine power which can penetrate the hardest heart at last brought conviction to the sinner, who now, when she found that life with all its brightness must be exchanged for the dark and lonesome grave, gladly turned to hear of that mercy which alone could make it yield its victory. Eagerly did her ears drink in the sweet assurance of her Saviour's love from the lips of her gentle step-daughter. How bitterly did she regret her frivolous life ! how different every pleasure appeared now it was mirrored by a dying eye ! how intense was her gratitude to Ellen for her loving care of her never-dying soul. And she patiently repressed every groan of anguish which could cause a pang to her gentle nurse, whose fair prospects had all been so cheerfully resigned, for the purpose of becoming her consoler, and the instrument in God's hand (for to Him gave she all the glory) of directing her thoughts to that cross which we are all bidden to take up,

After fourteen months of severe suffering, it pleased God to release her ; but this did not happen till she had come forth from out the fiery furnace as out of a refiner's fire. Three days before she died I accompanied my mother, at her express desire, to be present at the marriage of Ellen, for Lady Clifford insisted upon its taking place during her life ; for, as she told my mother, she felt certain Ellen would sacrifice all her happiness as a wife to be the mother of her motherless babe. It was a sad change to witness this once beautiful young woman so worn by suffering that I should never have recognized her ; but the trial had been her salvation—she was perfectly resigned to the will of God, and calmly waited His time. It was then, in her room, into which death was so soon to enter, that the bridal ceremony took place. A sweet smile illuminated the face of the dying woman as she flung her arms around Ellen's neck and whispered her thankfulness that she saw her made happy. The scene was too melancholy, and I was glad to leave the room, which I did not again re-enter until I stood, with my cousins, to see the last of Lady Clifford ere the coffin lid was closed ; but there was not one of us who did not feel fully assured that she had entered into that rest which is promised to all who cast their burden on Him who has declared, that " He will give them rest."

I returned home soon after the funeral, and as I was myself married the following summer, I saw nothing more of my cousin Ellen for some years, but I knew she had a great many trials to contend with. Her father was overwhelmed with debt, in consequence of his son's extravagance at college, and the beautiful estate, where I had spent so many happy hours, passed into the hands of strangers. The girls, having no one to guide them, made imprudent love matches, and were separated far



and wide. Fanny and the last baby had died within a year after Lady Clifford.

But poor Ellen's greatest trial was yet to come, and it was one which, but for her faith in God, would surely have crushed her to the earth. Her beloved husband was killed by a railway accident only a few days after she had been called upon to resign her eldest boy ; his little body still laid unburied awaiting his father's arrival, who had been sent for, and who was hastening home to pour sweet comfort into the stricken mother's breast, when one of those fearful collisions took place which hurried him into eternity, there to meet his boy whom he was destined to see no more on earth.

I did not see poor Ellen at that time, but heard from a friend of hers how, with her usual unselfishness, she had stifled all her sorrow to administer comfort to her poor broken-hearted old father, who had become almost imbecile, and totally depending on her for support. It was when she had been a widow some three years, that, my husband having business in that part of the country, I accompanied him to see my cousin Ellen. I found her very much changed in appearance ; it was so grievous to see that beautiful hair confined under the close border of the widow's cap ; but, although her face had lost much of the brilliancy of youth, there rested on it the same sweet smile, though of a sadder cast, which had always characterized it. She talked long and earnestly to me of the trials she had been called upon to endure, and proved, past all doubt, that it was her perfect faith and trust in God which had enabled her to bear up under them.

Attending on her peevish, discontented father was a task almost any one would have shrank from, because his mental



powers were so weakened that nothing could satisfy him. No fond voice of a beloved husband was there to soothe her, for that was silent in the grave ; no childish voice to lisp mamma, for both her little ones had died ; and yet there was no gloom in Ellen's household ; she delighted in the society of the young people of the parish, visited the poor, administered to all their wants with an unsparing hand, and had a smiling welcome for all.

You have seen people, I am sure, who, when they have been called upon to endure any trial, have so wrapt themselves up in their own selfish sorrow as to make every one round them miserable. I have known many who, after some beloved child has been taken away, close up their shutters, hardly suffering the sun's rays to penetrate into the gloom which pervades the whole household ; the merry laugh of children is checked almost before uttered, and the once cheerful voice is changed to a pining, discontented whine. Is not this as much as to say, God has no right to afflict me ? Shall we then receive all good at His hand, and no evil ? Can He not recall what He gives ? We are not forbidden to weep for our lost ones, for our Saviour Himself wept at the grave of Lazarus ; but we are forbidden to sorrow as those who have no hope.

It may be almost impossible at first to say "Thy will, not mine, Oh God, be done;" but if we remember that He not only does not willingly afflict the children of men, but that He doeth all things well, we should be meeker under His chastisements, instead of rebelling against His unerring will. I remember being much struck by hearing of a lady who had lost her only son. She closed up the shutters of her house, and for three years darkness and mourning reigned supreme. At the end of that time a gentleman of the Quaker persuasion called to see her,

and she accosted him thus : “ You find me still mourning for my beloved one.” “ Yea, madam,” replied the gentleman, “ and I am grieved to find that you have not yet forgiven God Almighty.” This reproof, so simple yet so bitter, had its effect upon the lady. She ordered the light of day again to illumine her house, and bowed in deep humility her rebellious spirit to the inevitable stroke.

In this short tale, my dear young friends, you will see the effect of the verse on which it is founded. Ellen had remembered her God in the days of her youth, before the evil days came upon her ; it was not in times of trial and sorrow that she had to seek Him ; consequently as her years increased she found pleasure in Him whom she had sought in her young days. Yes, she had remembered her Creator in the midst of all the pleasures of youth, and she is now a living monument of the truth that “ He has not forgotten her age.”

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*“Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven.”—St. Matt. xix. 14.*

This beautiful verse is, as I am sure you know, repeated by all the Evangelists. What a source of delight it must have been to the mothers, when rebuked by the disciples, to hear such blessed and comforting words from the Saviour ! Does it not then behove every parent to bring their little ones to Christ ? Who can resist such a beautiful invitation—“Suffer the little children to come, and forbid them not ? ”

Now, there is not one of you, I am sure, who has not at some time or another witnessed the rite of baptism performed

by our clergyman ; but did you ever consider its institution ? Probably you have just looked upon it as a pretty sight to see a little infant held at the font to receive its name, or, what is more probable, have laughed to hear its cries as the cold water was sprinkled on its tiny face. Now, if you will look into the sixteenth verse of the sixteenth chapter of St. Mark, you will find that our blessed Saviour there declares that “ none can enter the kingdom of heaven, except he be born again of water ;” and also, that “ by His own baptism He did sanctify the element of water to the mystical washing away of sin.”

“ Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and lo I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world,” was the command given and promise made to His disciples just before His ascension.

Our church urges on all the duty of bringing their children to be baptized as soon after their birth as possible, and it always appears to me a very sad neglect when I see whole families growing up, whose parents have never yet thought it worth their while to bring their little ones to Christ, by having them received into His church as members of the same mystical body.

I wish now to relate a scene I was eye-witness to, in which a dear little babe was baptized just before he was called upon to receive that crown of glory which fadeth not away. This little babe had been seriously ill for several days, and I was one night keeping watch with the young mother, when at midnight the kind physician intimated to me the necessity of having the rite of baptism administered to the little creature, on whom it was plain to see death had set its marble seal. But who could undertake to tell the weeping mother that all hope was over, and that she must resign her beautiful babe to the

cold embrace of death? She alone appeared unconscious of danger. However, as there was no one there but myself to perform this painful task, I told her as gently as I could, that as all infantine diseases were more or less uncertain in their results, her husband wished to have the babe baptized, and that the clergyman only awaited her orders. I took the little creature from the cradle and, placing him on my lap, waited till he should be summoned up-stairs. A few moments only elapsed ere he came, and, without one word of comfort to the stricken mother, commenced the service. I fancy he saw the necessity of haste, for surely there was no mistaking the grey hue which had gradually, for the last few minutes, been overshadowing the infant's face.

At many baptisms have I been an interested witness. I have held at the font the long-desired heir of a noble house, as well as him whose inheritance was nought but poverty and sorrow. It is always to me a beautiful sight to see the little innocents of whom our Saviour declares "of such is the kingdom of heaven," receiving the sign of that cross under which they swear by their sureties to fight manfully and boldly against the world and the devil. But there was something so touchingly solemn in this midnight baptism that I could scarcely control my feelings. The deep and silent agony of the father as he strove to whisper words of comfort to the young mother which he was so far from feeling, fell with painful intensity on my ears, which had listened to the same so often. The rites were at last concluded, and the dear babe signed with our Saviour's cross—a cross he was never to bear, for without one effort for victory the crown of eternal life was within his reach. The words faltered on the dear old minister's tongue as he slowly pronounced the blessing on the sweet babe just passing away. No pain



disturbed him ; by his faint breathing alone could you tell that life still held dominion there. But scarcely fifteen minutes elapsed after he had been received into the “ark divine” when little Edward’s eyes opened on a glorious eternity.

“The Lord gave, the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord !” exclaimed the minister as he gently strove to soothe the agony of the young mother’s first grief. “Oh ! think of that glorious rest which your babe is now enjoying ; hard it is I know to resign him, but from your arms he goes to his Saviour’s. Your treasure is now sheltered by Him who said, ‘Bring them to me.’ What earthly love can compare with that he is now in full possession of ? Remember it is God who gives and God who takes away. Oh ! pray earnestly to Him to give you strength to stand—

‘ In faith and hope and tireless zeal,  
Till the heart’s broken chain,  
In links of everlasting love,  
Be blended once again.’ ”

The young grief-stricken mother was led by her husband from the room, and I was left to assist the nurse in preparing little Edward for his grave. How lovely he looked in his pure white shroud ! I could scarcely believe it was death I looked on ; but, alas ! all was cruel reality, and nothing left to tell of his welcome birth but the sighs and tears of his bereaved parents. After seeing all arranged as I felt the young mother would wish, I went home, desiring the nurse to say that I would return in the evening. It would be impossible for me to dwell on all the events of that sorrowful week, at the end of which dear baby was buried. Such a day of grief must be endured, to be felt in all its harrowing bitterness ; no one but a parent can express the agony of seeing the beloved one shrouded



for the grave, the bright eyes closed, and the warm tint of health exchanged for the grey hue of death.

To feel how vain a father's prayers,  
How vain a mother's tears ;  
To think the cold grave now must close  
O'er what was once the chief  
Of all their treasured joys on earth,—  
This is a mother's grief.

The bell tolling the awful requiem for the early dead struck with painful force on the hearts of the bereaved parents. They felt the desolate void of their home. What could console them for the vacant crib and nursery? Nothing, I knew, so I presumed not to preach resignation, which God alone can grant ; for it is only—

When the first wild throb is o'er  
Of anguish and despair,  
That we lift the eye of faith to heav'n,  
And feel our darlings there.  
This best can dry the gushing tear,  
This yields the heart relief,  
Until the Christian's pious hope  
O'ercomes a mother's grief.

It is, of course, many years since this event took place, and several little boys and girls have been sent, I trust, a comfort to my bereaved friend. Yet I will venture to say that this midnight baptism has never been forgotten, and that little Edward still lives in his mother's memory, and will do so till she is called to join him on that happy shore where adieus and farewells shall be heard no more, and where, as the first of her household band, he will welcome her to the joys he was so early called upon to partake of by Him who invited the little children to come unto Him, and so beautifully declared that “of such is the kingdom of heaven.”

*“Cast thy bread upon the waters ; for thou shalt find it after many days.”—Ecclesiastes xi. 1.*

This injunction, you all know, was given by Solomon, the son of David, in the book called Ecclesiastes, and is well worthy your serious attention. We are all of us able to show kindness of some sort or other to our fellow-creatures ; and we are assured that the smallest one shown for Christ's sake shall not go unrewarded. Our Saviour's own words, “ Verily I say unto you, that inasmuch as you have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me,” is a bright assurance which should inspire every one with an earnest heartfelt desire to relieve the necessities of their fellow-creatures. I will now endeavour to illustrate this verse by relating a scene which was enacted under my own immediate observation, and I trust to interest you sufficiently, so that you will never throw away an opportunity of doing good, but cheerfully endeavour to obey your Divine Redeemer when He bids you to “ go and do likewise.”

A young girl who resided with her widowed mother on the outskirts of the town in which I lived, was returning rather late on Saturday night from taking some work home, on the finishing of which she had depended for their subsistence for the next week, when she was startled by hearing a groan of pain proceeding from a person who was lying by the roadside. At first Rose felt inclined to go on, for she had heard of cases where men, disguised as females, excited the sympathy of the passer-by, by their groans, only to rob and perhaps murder them. However, Rose's heart was too tender to suffer her to pass without first ascertaining whether any one really needed her assistance, and stooping down, saw to her surprise that a

young woman, with an infant in her arms, laid there almost unable to move. Rose lifted her up, and with a great deal of difficulty succeeded in assisting her to walk across the field which divided the road from her mother's cottage. Her mother, who was a poor, sickly, weak-minded woman, worn down by trouble and poverty, was shocked when she saw the addition Rose had brought to the cottage ; and I am sorry to add, that instead of assisting her in her good work, she commenced blaming her for not having sent the woman to the Union House for relief. Rose made no answer until she had got the unfortunate stranger comfortably settled in her little bed. She then, in her own sweet way, expostulated with her mother, and reminded her of our blessed Saviour's injunction, that “we should have pity on the poor.” She talked also about the parable of the good Samaritan, till her mother could no longer refuse the charity for which her daughter pleaded so gently, and she consented to prepare some nourishment for the invalid, while Rose undressed the unfortunate baby and fed it with some warm milk. As soon as she had accomplished this task, and laid the baby down in a sweet sleep, she requested permission of her mother to be allowed to fetch the doctor, as it seemed impossible to arouse the stranger from the stupor into which she had fallen. Her mother was extremely unwilling to allow her to go into the town alone at that hour, but Rose declared that “she had no fear ; she trusted in God to protect her from danger,” and started on her errand of mercy.

She arrived at the house of my brother-in-law, and fortunately found him just come in, so bidding her step into his gig he drove her quickly home.

It was from him that I heard the account of this affair, when he called the next morning, asking me to accompany him to

the cottage, and I thus became an eye-witness of the scene which I wish to make use of in order to illustrate the verse under our consideration. The unfortunate young person had died early in the morning, without having sufficiently recovered her powers of speech as to enable her to tell who she was, or where she came from. A coroner's inquest was held on the body, which was that of a very young and delicate female, who had evidently never been used to tread in the lower ranks of life. The verdict returned was, "That she had died from exhaustion, in consequence of exposure to the inclemency of the weather." A very careful investigation was instituted by the authorities, and advertisements inserted in all the local papers but nothing was elicited at the time which could throw any light on this strange affair; therefore the body was committed to the grave, and there the matter rested. After the funeral, a consultation was held as to what was to be done with the baby, a sweet little fellow, apparently about six weeks old. Rose's mother strongly urged its being sent to the Union house, but her daughter as resolutely opposed it, declaring "that she had earned her right to it by saving its life, and nothing should compel her to part with it. She would be a mother to it until its lawful guardians could be found; she felt so sure that the ladies would never let her want the drop of milk, and she trusted to God for the rest." It was really beautiful to witness the trusting faith of this young girl—how she put to shame those who prided themselves on the charity given out of their abundance. But here Rose stood alone, with nothing but her faith in God's promise, "that he is blessed who provides for the poor and needy." Her earnings were scarcely sufficient to keep want from the door, and yet she willingly took upon herself a burden which she felt was a burden of love. No



promise of help did she ask, but clasping the little innocent babe to her bosom, exclaimed, “God so deal with me and mine, as I deal tenderly with this motherless babe.” So the infant was left with her, and you may readily believe she was not suffered to want either clothes or milk for her nursling. But she never asked help from any one ; she worked early and late, never neglecting her duty to her mother, who required many comforts in her ailing state, which Rose, in her unselfish love, would deprive herself of necessities to procure. How few of the great ones of our land, who revel in wealth and luxury, would deny themselves comforts with which half their life is surfeited, to act as Rose did ?

I was so much interested in Rose and her little protégé, that I frequently used to visit her. It was amusing to see how beautifully clean she always kept him ; she delighted in dressing him in white, and would wash and iron for him long after other people were soundly sleeping. Rose would often tell me that “she was sure he was of no low birth, and if his father ever came to claim him, she would like that he should find him kept like a little gentleman.” This was a very pardonable pride in poor Rose, who had carefully put the clothes away he had on when found, in order that they might be identified, and they were certainly made of materials which justified Rose in her suspicion, for they were very unlike any used by the poorer classes in England. Of course the prevalent idea that his young mother “had borne unhusbanded a mother’s name,” had prevented many of the worldly righteous from upholding Rose in her loving care of the little stranger, and I am sorry to say, that as the excitement of the affair died away, her patrons grew lukewarm in their sympathy. But Rose never wavered in her self-imposed task, and why was this ? She



sought no earthly meed of praise ; and her purely disinterested charity we may all feel sure was registered on high. Her life was one continued scene of self-denial ; a murmur never escaped her lips as the wants of her little nursling grew more pressing ; but she managed him so well that he required less nursing than any babe I ever saw. Many a mother would do well to take a lesson from Rose, and their little ones would be less dependent on their nurses, whose pernicious indulgence often does more to form the bad habits of youth, than people are disposed to allow.

Rose, not knowing whether the baby had been baptized, was anxious to have the ceremony preformed, and accordingly my sister and brother-in-law stood sponsors for him, and he received the name of Charles, Rose remarking that, "when-ever his father should claim him, it would be easy for him to resume his name, supposing that he had already received one." So little Charley grew, and was a fine lovely boy of three years ere his history came to light, which it did in the following manner :

An advertisement appeared in one of the city papers, asking information of a young person who, with an infant of five weeks old, had left her home on such a day, now about three years ago, and was supposed to have been murdered. Any one giving intelligence leading to their discovery, either alive, or dead, would be very handsomely rewarded. My brother-in-law brought over the paper to me, and showing the advertisement, requested me to go over and speak to Rose about it, for it was very evident that the dead mother of her little protégé was the person advertised for. I was delighted at the chance of this long-lasting mystery being cleared up, and went immediately to speak to Rose about it. The idea of parting from

the little boy was a dreadful source of sorrow to poor Rose, but she was with her usual good sense glad to think that there was a chance of putting a stop to all the ill-natured surmises which his poor mother's mysterious death had given rise to. My brother answered the advertisement by requesting a personal interview with the advertiser, and, in consequence, a gentleman, arrived by mail the next evening, when the following facts were elicited :

It appeared that this gentleman was the captain of a vessel, and had married a young girl very much against her and his parents' wishes. Her father, a stern and passionate man, discarded her, and she was anything but kindly received by her husband's family, whose sisters, jealous of her youth and beauty, took no pains to hide their dislike. This young creature had very delicate health, and therefore was totally unfit to cope with any trial or unkindness. As long as her husband was with her she was cheerful and happy, but he was making arrangements for a voyage which he feared would detain him two if not three years, and it was impossible to take such a delicate creature to share the hardships which he and his hardy crew must inevitably encounter. He, however, very injudiciously placed her with his family, which knowing their dislike to her, he was very wrong to do, but he acted for what he thought best, exacting a promise that she should receive every kindness. He sailed a week after the birth of his son, who, curiously enough, was baptized and called after himself, Charles Manvers. What unkindness was resorted to which drove the wretched girl from home will ever remain a mystery, till the accuser and the accused stand face to face before the bar of God. Captain Manvers was dreadfully overcome when he heard the particulars of his young wife's destitute condition,

who had left home without a sixpence ; his family informing him that they supposed she had gone to her father. But that, of course, was a false statement. They could not fail of having seen the advertisements which we had inserted in all the papers, but I suppose that their conscience accusing them of being her murderer, they thought it better to keep dark, rather than take any steps towards recovering the baby ; probably, also, they feared the revelations which the young mother might have made.

I cannot find words or time to tell you of all Captain Manvers' gratitude to Rose for her generous care of his dying wife and darling boy, whose likeness to himself fully proved his parentage. How to reward Rose sufficiently was, in his estimation, impossible ; therefore, you will not be surprised to hear, that feeling sure such a girl would adorn any sphere, he married her, and raised the humble cottage girl to be the wife of a wealthy captain. Rose bore her prosperity as meekly as she had done her poverty. She was sensible of her deficiencies, and knew that something more was wanting to make her a gentlewoman than fine clothes. She therefore took great pains to cultivate her mind, so as to render her fit for her station. Whatever she learned, so far from rendering her proud and vain, convinced her how much more she had to learn. She never put on any of those ridiculous airs which people are so apt to assume who are suddenly raised from an obscure situation. Religion taught her that "it is God alone who, by His providence, pulleth down one and setteth up another ; and that it is He who lifteth the poor out of the dust, and the needy from the mire ; and to Him she gave all the glory." She never forgot from whence she had been raised ; and it made her humble, not proud. Neither did she become extravagant or

show a fondness for finery. She dressed agreeably to her station as a girl, and so she did now as a wife ; she never exposed herself to ridicule by going beyond it ; she was an excellent wife, mother, and mistress, and fully justified Captain Manvers' opinion of her. The little boy never lost his place in her affections, although she had several children of her own.

Now, my dear young friends, my chief aim in this tale has been to set before you the law of kindness. You may never in your lifetime be called to act in such a scene as this, but scarcely a day passes over that we cannot do something or other that will add to the comfort or happiness of another. Never heed how small your opportunities ; do not waste them ; be encouraged by those beautiful texts of Scripture which say, “To do good and distribute, forget not, for with such sacrifice God is well pleased.” Be merciful according to thy power.” Have pity on the poor, for by so doing you lend to the Lord.”

Remember, Rose had no hope of ever being rewarded when she took to her home the perishing mother and infant, save by her own conscience. She had not studied the beautiful precepts contained in her Bible for nothing ; she was not a mere nominal Christian, but acted as if she felt God's eye was upon her. She was blamed by her mother, sneered at by many, still she persevered in her good work. Her most exaggerated hopes of reward, had she possessed any, would have fallen far short of what in reality did take place. But she sought no earthly meed of praise. Guided by her faith in God's promise, that “he is blessed who provides for the sick and needy” she went steadily on in the path of duty. Setting sneers and reproaches at defiance, she confidently “cast her bread upon the waters,” and you see how fully she reaped the fulfilment of the promise, that “it should be returned to her after many days.”



*“The poor is hated even of his own neighbour ; but the rich hath many friends.”*—Prov. of Solomon. xiv. 20.

This verse, my dear young friends, which is taken from the fourteenth chapter of the Proverbs of Solomon, shows us how much value the world sets upon the possession of riches—the fading riches of this world. What can be so ridiculous as the homage which is paid to wealth ? for it causes the character of the possessor of it to be quite overlooked by those who are eager for his notice. How will people bow and cringe to its power, as though it included all that was needful to ensure happiness ! But we will now pause for one minute and see what our blessed Saviour Himself declares, and I refer you to the 19th chapter of St. Matthew’s Gospel, where you will read that a young man puts this question to Him : “Master, what good thing shall I do that I may inherit eternal life ?” Our Saviour answers him by saying, that “he must keep all the commandments,” to which the young man replies, that “he had done so from his youth up,” adding, “What lack I yet ?” Our Saviour tells him “To sell all he has and give to the poor, so should he have treasure in heaven.” Then we read that this young man went away sorrowful, and why ? Because he had great possessions. To part from his wealth was a trial he could not bring his mind to. It was too great a sacrifice to be required of him, and our Saviour exclaims, “Verily, I say unto you, that a rich man shall hardly enter the kingdom of heaven.” Now you must not fall into the error of supposing that our Saviour meant that because a man was rich it was hard for him to enter heaven ; it was not the actual possession of riches, but the undue value which he set upon them. It



rendered this young man, you find, indifferent to the unsearchable riches of Christ. This was the sin ; the treasure in heaven which our Saviour promised was secondary to his earthly possessions, for you read, “ he went away sorrowing.” There is no doubt that riches debase the minds of many, rendering them hard-hearted and selfish ; they have many friends, as our text declares, but it is the friendship of the world. David says, “ A little that a righteous man hath is better than the riches of the richest.” Again he says, that “ A man heapeth up riches and knoweth not who shall gather them ; consequently he walketh in a vain show.” Again, that “ they trust in their wealth, and boast themselves of the multitude of their riches.” How numerous are the texts of Scripture which I could bring to prove the truth of this, and I do wish that you would read them over before you proceed to read the following tale illustrating the one chosen for our present consideration. Any subject leading you to search the Scriptures, provided you ask the assistance and guidance of God’s Holy Spirit, must result in your benefit. How awful is the denunciation pronounced by our Saviour in the 24th verse of the 6th chapter of St. Luke’s Gospel, “ Woe unto you that are rich ! for ye have received your consolation ;” and surely you have all read the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, but you may perhaps read it with more interest if I explain it to you. The rich man, we are told, “ was clothed in purple ”—this colour in those times was the dress of the rich and high-born only—and that “ he fared sumptuously every day.” Now see the contrast between him and Lazarus : “ He was a beggar, full of sores.” It was a common custom in Jerusalem and throughout the East, to lay a cripple or leper at the door of some wealthy man, or to place him in a public thoroughfare, stretched on his mat, or

wooden litter ; and this history tells us “ that Lazarus laid at the rich man’s gate, and desired to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man’s table.” Now, among the ancients napkins were not used for wiping the hands, but they were dipped in dishes of water, and wiped with the soft part of the bread, which was afterwards thrown to the dogs—and this bread poor Lazarus craved ; but we are not led to believe by this parable that it was even granted him, for we are told that “ he died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham’s bosom.” Now, this phrase probably bears allusion to the custom at Jewish feasts of several guests lying on one couch, the head of one being placed near the bosom of another. It signifies a high state of felicity, for we are told in the 13th chapter of St. John’s gospel, that the disciple whom Jesus loved leaned on his breast at supper. But what is the fate of the rich man ? ‘ He lifts up his eyes in hell,’ and begs that mercy of Lazarus which he had denied him on earth. What answer does he receive ? “ That he in his life-time had received good things, and Lazarus evil things ; ” the same contrast in their fates still existed, only reversed : “ he was tormented, Lazarus comforted.” Had he used the talent committed to his care in relieving the needy, feeding the hungry, he might be with Lazarus enjoying the joys of heaven ; but he had shut his ear to the voice of mercy, and his riches had sunk him into the depths of hell. Does this parable not prove to you how vain is the possession of wealth if it hardens the heart ? What value does it possess only as it enables us to administer to the necessities of others ? As the rich use the power given them, so will they have to answer for it. But I will now proceed to relate an incident which came under mine own immediate ob-

servation, and I think it will amuse and instruct you as much as it did me at the time it happened.

Very near my house there lived in a small cottage a middle-aged single lady. She was exceedingly plain in her person, and very eccentric in manner; but she was kind-hearted, gentle and benevolent, with a heart overflowing with generosity and good-will to all. It was a source of wonder to me how she managed to live and keep up so respectable an appearance upon her very limited income, which did not quite count forty pounds per annum. She was always happy and cheerful, the merriest of old maids, ever willing to fly to the aid of the sick and destitute, to whose wants she ministered with unsparing hand what, if she had in consequence less comfort at home, for the sake of giving it to another, it only made her more grateful to God, who had enabled her to carry relief to any one more needy than herself. Many a bitter winter's night have I known her to leave her bed, and, through torrents of rain, go on her errand of mercy to the hovel of some poor dying creature, whose last moments she would smooth by assurances of her Saviour's love, and whose weak faith she would encourage as she passed from the poverty of earth to the eternal riches of heaven; and then she would return wet and shivering to her own desolate home, with the sweet smile of benevolence on her lips, and plans of future comfort and help in her large, loving heart.

Miss Thorne was of course of too little consequence to be noticed by the high and rich families who resided in the town. How could a poor obscure old maid, who lived in a small cottage meanly furnished, and keeping no servant, expect to be even thought of? Whether she felt this or not she gave no sign; she quietly pursued her own path, relieving the poor, visiting

the sick, and advising the erring. Forgetful of self, she held on the even tenor of her way, until an event occurred which worked a strange metamorphosis in her hitherto friendless position.

I was taking tea with her one evening when the postman brought her a letter from a lawyer in the city of N——, requesting her to meet him at his office on the following day; enclosing a five pound note for her expenses. We talked and wondered what this could possibly portend, and Miss Thorne laughed heartily at my suggestion that she must have fallen heir to some fabulous property, and declared that “she had not a relation in the world that she knew of.” However, the next morning she hired a post chaise and started on her journey, which, although but a distance of nine miles, was quite an event in her hitherto uneventful life.

She was absent two days, and then called to tell me the welcome tidings, that an old uncle whom she had never seen, and scarcely even recollected as having gone out to India when she was a child, had there died, and bequeathed to her, as the only surviving child of his twin sister, the munificent income of twelve thousand pounds per annum.

The calm manner in which Miss Thorne announced this puzzled me. Here was a step from poverty to affluence which might have overwhelmed a far stronger-minded person, but she was as cool and collected as though she was only just drawing her quarterly allowance of nine pounds. Of course this news soon spread through the town, and the poor despised old maid rose twelve thousand pounds in the estimation of her aristocratic neighbours. She must, as a matter of course, be taken into their society, and be noticed by their august body. They could afford now to overlook her eccen-



tricities in consideration of her wealth, and it was really amusing to see with what astonishing rapidity friends and acquaintances rose up, now that Miss Thorne needed neither advice or assistance. She was a remarkably clever woman, and very sensitive of the ridiculous, which, but for her Christian character, would doubtless have shown itself in satirical bitterness, for it was impossible for her to be insensible to the marked courtesy paid her by those who, before this era, had never so much as bestowed a look upon her. She, however, made no remark, as she fully understood the truths contained in the third chapter of the General Epistle of St. James, and “held her tongue in subjection.”

The first thing effected by Miss Thorne was the purchase of a very pretty villa about three miles out of town. She furnished it handsomely, and with every convenience; hired a respectable man and his wife, with their oldest daughter, to live with her, bought a beautiful little carriage and two ponies, and settled down quietly to enjoy the bright change in her life and prospects.

She was of course besieged with visitors, whose advances she met with lady-like politeness, and their congratulations with kindness.

About ten days afterwards every lady who had honoured her with a call received a card, left by Miss Thorne’s footman, on which was printed in gold figures £12,000. Every one was at a loss to know what this could possibly portend, and many were the conjectures hazarded on the subject. At last one lady, bolder than the rest, undertook to solve the mystery by calling on Miss Thorne and requesting an explanation.

Miss Thorne’s answer was so characteristic of herself that I cannot do better than give it in her own words :



“Madam, I have now resided in this town for a period of sixteen years. During that time I have had a hard struggle with life ; I have several times been prostrated by very severe sickness, and yet no lady thought me worthy to come under my roof. I have frequently suffered the pangs of hunger, yet I received neither help or sympathy. In the house of God (which, thanks be to His holy name, is alike open to the poor and rich), had it not been for the free pews, which of you would have dared to have braved the opinion of the world by opening your richly decorated ones to the poor despised old maid ? How is it, then, that my inheritance has worked such a reformation ? I am not conscious of any change myself—I am the same plain old maid as before—and surely if my conduct during sixteen years’ residence amongst you has been such as not to merit the notice now so freely bestowed, I really cannot understand how a fortune so unexpectedly inherited can, in so short a time, have rendered me a fit object for your civilities. I came, therefore, to the conclusion, and I trust I injure no one by it, that it was my wealth you all paid court to, and not simply myself. I accordingly sent each lady a card, acknowledging their call, and here the unsought-for acquaintance must end. For it is not in pandering to the rich and great that my wealth will be spent, but in teaching the ignorant, feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, and visiting the sick. In the hovels of the poor and wretched, at the bedside of the sick and dying, are the place I shall fill for the remainder of my existence ; and I bless God who has made me the steward of such wealth, and I humbly pray that at His judgment seat I may not have to answer for one misspent pound.”

Now, my dear young friends, my object in this tale is to

point out to you the exceeding folly of setting value on wealth just for wealth's sake. In this case you see all Miss Thorne's noble qualities were overlooked, and herself treated with scorn and neglect, solely because she was poor ; no sooner did she inherit wealth than all flocked to pay court to her, or rather to it, and I am sure you cannot but admire the manner in which she met their advances. Few would have had the courage to have acted as she did, for I think hardly any one would have had the wit to have thought of it. She was revenged for years of neglect and scorn without injuring one person ; she felt her independence, and acted accordingly ; and I can assure you that there are many families in England living now who would willingly give their testimony to the truth of this tale, and countless numbers who were snatched from sin and wretchedness, and owe both their temporal and spiritual welfare to Miss Thorne's fortunate possession of twelve thousand per annum.

She has herself long since passed away to the inheritance of the saints above, and I can only pray that the riches of Christ, my dear young friends, may be your portion. You need no other wealth, for it is a mine which never fails. Remember Agur's prayer :

“Give me neither poverty or riches ; feed me with food convenient for me, lest I be full and deny thee, and say, ‘Who is the Lord.’ ”

You all know our blessed Saviour became poor, that we might be made rich in Him. Follow, then, His footsteps, and never forget that “Godliness is great riches if a man is content with what he hath ; for we brought nothing into this world, neither may we carry anything out.”

*"Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy."*—St. Matt. v. 7.

These beautiful words form a portion of the sermon preached by our blessed Saviour when He went up with His disciples into a mountain to pray, and is contained in the fifth chapter of St. Matthew's Gospel, the first nine verses of which are called the Beatitudes, a word signifying extreme joy or happiness, consummate bliss, as it conveys a declaration of the blessedness belonging to certain virtues promised by our Saviour. In the verse we are about to consider, we are told that "the merciful are blessed, and shall obtain mercy." In another portion of Scripture we are exhorted "to be merciful according to our power, for so shall we gather to ourselves a good reward in the day of necessity." Have we any right to expect that mercy from God which we refuse to our fellow-creatures? and yet when we pray it is generally in these words, "God be merciful to me a sinner." We are told that "God's mercy is everlasting; that He is gracious and merciful, long suffering and of great goodness; whosoever putteth his heart in Him, mercy embraceth him on every side;" and again, "His mercy is great toward them that fear Him, for like as a father pitieth his own children, even so is the Lord merciful unto them that fear Him." St. Paul tells us that "God is rich in mercy," and exhorts us all to put on "bowels of mercy, kindness, meekness, long suffering," etc. St. Peter also speaks of "our lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, which is according to His abundant mercy;" and again, Solomon declares that "he that despiseth his neighbour sinneth, but he that hath mercy on the poor, happy is he;" also, "He that honoureth God hath mercy on the poor;" and again, the prophet Micah declares that "God

retaineth not His anger for ever, because He delighteth in mercy.” David implores God to be merciful unto him, because he felt that He was plenteous in mercy to all that call on Him. Many texts which declare the mercy of God could we find, had we time to consider them, but I think I have given you a sufficient number now to prove this beautiful attribute of our Divine Redeemer. I will therefore proceed to illustrate this by a scene in my dear father’s life, and may it inspire you all to try to earn the bright reward promised to the merciful, viz., that “they shall obtain mercy.”

A great many years have elapsed since these events took place which I am now about to relate, but they are as indelibly impressed upon my mind as though they only happened yesterday.

A widow lady, who resided in a most beautiful place about five miles from my father’s house, had been left by her husband dependent upon her only son, who was about twenty-two years of age at the time of his father’s death. He was travelling on the continent when the news reached him, and he hastened home to take possession of his inheritance. He had been much pampered and indulged by his father; therefore this alone should have been a sufficient reason for Mr. Steward’s making a separate provision for him, as his indulgences had fostered the seeds of selfishness, which were not likely to add much to his widowed mother’s comfort. My father had been for years the legal adviser of Mr. Steward, but when called upon to make his will steadily refused to be made instrumental to what he always looked upon as a deep wrong. A will of this kind my dear father was never known to make, for he considered it both unjust and cruel. “You never can tell,” was his argument, “how your children are to turn out, and surely



the wife who has borne with you the cares and burdens of life ought not to be left depending on the caprices of her children."

Mr. Steward was very unwilling to call in another lawyer, but as my father resolutely refused to act, he was obliged, and Mrs. Steward and her two daughters were left entirely depending on her son, to whom all was left, with an injunction, certainly, to provide for his mother and sisters. My father thought this a most unjust will, as the idle habits of young Steward, added to his late extravagant style of living on the continent, were not likely to be conducive to the interests of either mother or sisters. He loved them as well as any one so fond of self could love, and in the first burst of grief for his father's death was willing to promise anything. My father, who still continued the legal adviser of the family, earnestly exhorted Mrs. Steward to have some settlement made on which she could depend, now that the feelings of her son were softened by his father's unlooked-for generosity. But unfortunately Mrs. Steward felt afraid that it would look like distrust of her own son, and refused to follow my father's advice, who, knowing young Steward's selfish character, felt sure that she would before long bitterly repent her not having done so. For the next three months young Steward remained at home with his mother, and the sisters continued their studies as usual. But at the end of that time he began to find home and its quiet duties extremely irksome to him. Having been brought up to no profession, time grew weary on his hands, and he once more started for the continent.

We were upon very intimate terms with this family. The Misses Steward would very frequently stay a week with us and we with them. It was not long after Mr. Steward's death before a great change was observable in the house, which had



always been kept up in a style amounting to magnificence ; and it was justified by the extent of Mr. Steward's income. We often used to hear rumours of the probability of Mrs. Steward being brought to poverty by the extravagance of her son ; but we in our luxurious home were too young to realize such an idea as connected with their name.

About eighteen months after Mr. Steward's death, his widow received a letter from a gentleman, informing her that her son had been visiting for some time in his family, and having asked the hand of his eldest daughter in marriage, he requested to hear from her what prospects awaited his child as her son's wife. Mrs. Steward immediately answered by informing him of the terms of her late husband's will. Mr. Spenser very prudently refused his consent to the marriage unless young Steward would make a separate provision for his mother and sisters, so as to leave no chance of interference with his daughter's claims.

Unfortunately the young couple were neither of them inclined to listen to such dull reasoning, and very imprudently eloped, and were made man and wife ere Mr. Spenser could come to any settlement with the parties most interested. Mr. Steward brought his bride to the house where his mother and sisters still resided, and a scene of sad regrets and unavailing murmurings was the result. The bride was a very stylish, beautiful girl, but possessing an indomitable spirit of pride and self-will, which had been fostered by luxurious indulgence, and she had no idea of sharing her married home with the mother and sisters of her husband. A separate residence was insisted upon, and poor Mrs. Steward now found out how foolishly she had acted in neglecting the advice of my father, who had so strongly urged her to take advantage of her son's

evident desire at his father's death to promote her comfort. He knew young Steward's character to be too selfish and exacting to be bound by a mere promise, and his conduct ever since had proved the justice of his suspicions. Large sums had been spent for which he refused to account, and bills had accumulated with frightful rapidity, for the tradesmen had been only too willing to grant unlimited credit. Claims against the estate had never been pressed, because the property was known to be immense ; but now, when disputing was high, people began to urge their claims, which young Steward showed no inclination to settle, and recourse was again had to my father for his advice and assistance.

Now it was that his counsel about the will was fully proved, for it was next to impossible to induce Mr. Steward so to retrench his expenses as to enable him to allow his mother an annual income adequate to her wants. His late means of indulgence had so fostered his natural selfishness, that he began to imagine that he really was not called upon to sacrifice his comforts so as to follow out his father's wishes. At last, with a great deal of difficulty, it was settled that Mrs. Steward and her two daughters should retire into a very pretty house belonging to my father, at a moderate rent, and her son agreed to allow her £300 per annum.

Well do I recollect my dear father's disgust at the mere pittance accorded by the son to the meek and loving mother, whose perfect trust in his honour had led her to act against the advice of her best friend. Time will not permit me to dwell on all the struggles and privations of poor Mrs. Steward ; £300 a year to one who once commanded £10,000, was a sad change, and one for which she was neither fitted by nature or education to cope with. The girls, nursed in the lap of luxury, had no

idea of helping themselves, and Laura, the second daughter, a meek-spirited, delicate girl, soon fell into ill health, which terminated her existence before she reached her seventeenth year.

Mr. Steward and his wife had, with their usual disregard to every one's feelings but their own, gone abroad soon after the settlement was made, and the beautiful homestead was left in the care of a steward, instead of being, as it ought justly to have been, the shelter of Mrs. Steward's declining years.

It was somewhere about three years after the death of Laura Steward that my father received a letter from Mr. Steward, asking him to effect a mortgage on the homestead, adding that unless he could raise eleven thousand pounds nothing but ruin and disgrace awaited him. He ended his letter by promising that if my father would assist him he would immediately come home and settle quietly down to the task of improving his estate.

In Mr. Steward's promises, you may well believe, my father had no faith, but for reasons which he did not explain, but which were dictated by the kindest motives, he advanced the money himself, and the beautiful place was once more put into order for the reception of its master and mistress.

Two years of fashionable dissipation showed strong marks on Mr. Steward's handsome personal appearance; his beautiful wife was a mere wreck, and plainly evinced her disgust at what she called her husband's senseless desire of rustication. She had always shown a marked dislike of my father, he being, as she well knew, instrumental in procuring Mrs. Steward's income, and I believe she stopped at nothing which was likely to injure him either in a private or public capacity.

He was always gentlemanly and courteous to her, but she

felt something in his manner as a tacit reproach to her heartlessness, when she insisted upon the mother and daughters leaving the luxurious home of her childhood's years. She had, during her residence abroad, become the mother of a boy and girl—sweet, lovely darlings they were—but she showed no affection for them, and left them entirely to the care of their nurse. She was the most heartless woman I ever met with. I disliked her extremely, because I always felt that she was indirectly the cause of poor Laura's illness and death, she being a special favourite of mine.

The mortgage having relieved Mr. Steward from his most pressing necessities, he soon commenced again to launch out into a style of extravagance altogether inconsistent with the reduced state of their income. The property was still such as would allow them every comfort, but it did not warrant any unnecessary expenditure. Mr. and Mrs. Steward's long residence in Paris had engendered a passion for gambling which no persuasion could convince of its folly, and large sums were nightly squandered by this unprincipled couple. At last everything became involved, debts of honour were loudly and boldly insisted upon, everything that money could be raised upon had disappeared, and now listen to the dread climax. My father was sent for in great haste one morning, and after a protracted absence returned with the awful tidings that young Steward had put an end to his existence in a moment of frenzy, occasioned by the overwhelming fact of his complete ruin, and to which he well knew he had himself been the chief abettor.

Now all was wailing, mourning and despair. Oh ! how can I describe the scene ? The poor mother weeping the untimely fate of her first-born, only son—her idolized child. Her fond heart had clung to him through all the privation and trial



wrought for her by his hand. Oh ! the depth of the love of a mother’s heart ! no shame or sin can wash it out ; the deeper the sorrow, the closer she clings. Oh ! you who are blessed with mothers, regard it as one of the sweetest privileges to be allowed to watch over her declining years ; beware how you send a pang to her loving tender heart, for as you have learned in that pretty hymn,

God will look with anger in His eyes,  
If you should ever dare despise

Your mother.

To paint the despair of the guilty wife, the heartless mother, as she found herself widowed and her babes fatherless, is a task beyond me. I will therefore turn to the kindness of my beloved father, who now generously came forward, and, forgetting all the injuries she had endeavoured to work for him, stood between her and ruin. Then it was he showed the inestimable value of a true friend, and restored, as far as he was able, peace to the broken-hearted. All just claims were settled, and as there was not a shilling left after the debts were paid, the beautiful homestead, of course, fell into my father’s hands, who had already advanced twelve thousand pounds upon it, It was but a very short time after this that the younger Mrs. Steward fell into ill health—dissipation had undermined her constitution, and now remorse was adding its deadly sting. Cancer threatened her life, and how could she expect, in this her hour of deep humiliation, that mercy which she had never shown to others ? But the fond mother whom she had so cruelly injured was there ; she turned not a deaf ear to the cry of agony, but took her place by the side of the sufferer, and earnestly sought to turn her thoughts to her merciful Saviour.

A bed of anguish is not the place for repentance ; the inten-



sity of pain so maddened the mind that it was impossible to bring her to a sense of her own sinful state. She constantly dwelt on the advantages she had cast away, and that her children would now be beggars ; their worldly prosperity was all that troubled her. To think of the beautiful home from which she was just passing away, as now in the possession of one she had so hated, was a knowledge which maddened her. She could not but feel that her own folly and bad advice to her husband had been the chief means of disinheriting her own children. Her father had died suddenly soon after her imprudent marriage, before he had time, even had he possessed the inclination of altering his will, which, being made at the time when his mind was irritated against her, had cut her off from any participation in his property. Poor Mrs. Steward ! how tenderly did she watch over her ungrateful daughter-in-law. She and her daughter Emily waited day and night upon her, burying every unkindness and insult in the untimely grave of the unfortunate suicide, showing mercy where they never received it, and feeling that it would not be granted to them even then if it laid in her power to deny it.

I often used to go and sit with Emily Steward, so as to allow Mrs. Steward a few hours' rest, which she was unwilling to grant herself. One morning I accompanied my father, as Mrs. Steward had sent a message requiring his presence, and was told upon my arrival that the scene was fast closing ; the agony so long endured had yielded to the power of mortification, and the poor sufferer laid exhausted but free from pain on the bed, which, being shaded by large heavy curtains, I was enabled to hear what passed without being seen. When my father approached the bedside, and took the cold thin hand within his own, she asked him "whether he had come to add his curse to

the many which were weighing her down ?” Oh ! how gently and kindly did he address the dying woman, as he expressed his earnest desire to give her all the comfort in his power to impart. He then sat down, and after explaining as succinctly as possible the state of the property, he told her that it was his intention to hold the homestead in trust for her children ; that he never intended making use of his right to it ; that it was solely for this purpose he had himself become the mortgagee ; that the children should be educated from the rents derived from this portion of her husband’s property ; that he would see to their welfare, making their grandmother their guardian. All claims against the estate which he himself had settled he destroyed before her eyes, and then, not stopping to hear the thanks which the dying woman tried to utter, he hurried home with joy and gladness in his heart, for he felt that he had been merciful according to his power.

Nobly did my dear father fulfil his promise. Immediately after the death of Mrs. Steward the children were placed with their grandmother and aunt, and the beautiful homestead let for a term of years. When young Steward attained his twenty-first birthday he took possession of the home which had been well-nigh lost to him for ever, and so well had the estate been managed during his minority, that he was able to secure both his aunt and sister a handsome portion at their marriage. Being a very seriously inclined young man, he entered the ministry. He still resides with his venerable grandmother in the place where his father was born, and when I was in England some years since I listened to many beautiful sermons from his pulpit, one of which was preached from the text upon which this tale is founded.

Since writing this, my dear father has been called to resign

his earthly possessions, for, I trust, those heavenly ones which are at God's right hand for evermore. He was, during the long life of seventy-eight years, blest with abundance. Freely did he give of it to the poor and needy. I never knew him to turn a deaf ear to the cry of another ; he gave with a liberal hand, and upbraided not ; mercy characterized all his charities, and I do not deem it presumptuous to hope that he has obtained the mercy that he never denied to others ; that he now enjoys the full completion of God's promise, that "blessed are the merciful, for they shall find mercy."

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*"Boast not thyself of to-morrow ; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth."*—Proverbs xxvii.

The verse for our present consideration is, as you all know, taken from the Proverbs of Solomon, and it contains a most solemn injunction, whether you regard it in a worldly or spiritual sense. To put off till to-morrow what ought to be performed to-day, is, to say the least of it, a very foolish and often dangerous practice. Who is sure of to-morrow ? Oh ! that I could impress on your minds, my dear young friends, the urgent necessity there is to seek God while He may be found. Do not wait till you are older—you may never see the time when you will feel inclined to quit the service of Satan for that of Christ. You have so many warnings of the uncertainty of life daily and hourly before you, that you must have, in many instances, been convinced of the truth of the verse we are now about to consider. How often have you seen carried to the grave one who but a few days before was in the full en-

joyment of health, and with as fair a prospect of long life before them as you now possess. You have also seen rich people suddenly reduced from affluence to poverty, as well as the poor man raised to a state of comfort and happiness. All this shows how uncertain everything is in this transitory life ; therefore, do to-day what you have to do, for to-morrow's sun may find you “sleeping the sleep which knows no waking.”

I will now relate a short tale, which I trust will impress on your minds more fully the danger of Procrastination. We are told that it is “the thief of time,” and most assuredly all find it so who foolishly put off any duty which should have been performed to-day.

Frank Mildmay was a young man of very respectable parentage, and had received a better education than most young men in his station of life were in the habit of obtaining, and would doubtless have been an excellent scholar, but for his silly habit of postponing everything. His lessons were always behindhand, and more than half of his holiday time was taken up in preparing tasks which could have been as easily learned the day before, for he was a boy of good abilities, and quickly committed anything to memory ; on the plea of this, to-day's lessons were postponed until to-morrow, and consequently he seldom kept his place at the head of his class.

It would have been well for Frank if this habit, bad as it was, had only affected his school days ; but it strengthened with his riper years, as all faults will, when not checked in the bud. When Frank was seventeen, his parents apprenticed him to a carpenter and builder, and as he was a very good natured, obliging fellow, he became a great favourite with his master, who, though often seriously annoyed by Frank's bad habit of procrastination, never took any pains to correct him



for it, except with a few sharp reproofs and a threat of punishment, which was never carried into execution. Frank soon got used to this, and the consequence was, he remained as careless as ever. I could, if I had time, relate a great many instances of Frank's folly in this respect during his apprenticeship; but one will suffice to convince you how much inconvenience and even danger may be incurred by this inexcusable habit of procrastination.

A farmer called on Frank's master one morning on his way to market, and requested him to send one of his young men to assist in propping the floor of his barn, which, owing to the weight of hay, seemed to be in danger of falling. Frank being just then at hand, was told by his master to fetch his tools and go immediately, as he had business some miles away. Frank went into the shop to get his tools, but thinking, as usual, that an hour hence would be soon enough, determined to finish some work which, being promised, his master had supposed completed yesterday, and he expected every minute that it would be sent for. Frank had scarcely completed the job, when one of the farm servants came to know the reason of his delay. He went then, but it was too late; the floor had given way, two valuable horses had been killed, and one of the hired men had with difficulty escaped with his life—having had his leg severely fractured by the pressure of one of the beams. Frank's services were then of no avail—the mischief which could have been averted but for his procrastinating carelessness, could not be amended by his present alacrity; one-half of it given at the right time would have prevented all the mischief which accrued. It is impossible to neglect our duties with impunity; however lightly we may at the time think upon them, there always comes a time, and too often when we least



expect it, when we are made to feel most bitterly how much of our present misery is caused by our past neglect.

Frank's master was, as you may suppose, exceedingly angry with him this time ; he had overlooked many instances of his conduct in this respect, merely because the results had not been detrimental to himself, but now he found that he lost a great deal of his custom, because his apprentice could not be depended upon. But as he had taken no pains to correct Frank of his fault, he ought not to have acted so unjustly as to dismiss him before his term of apprenticeship was ended ; but he did so, and Frank returned to his parents without any desire to amend this fault, which had become almost second nature.

Frank had an only sister, of whom he was passionately fond ; she was so many years younger than himself, that she had always been a pet and plaything, and he would do anything to please her. She was a very delicate child, owing to an accident which had injured her spine when a baby. Frank had made her a nice little cart, which she could propel along when seated in it, and many hours she spent in the lanes and fields, which must have been spent in the house had it not been for the thoughtful kindness of brother Frank. There was one spot Amy delighted in, and this was a beautiful grove ; a wide stream of water divided it from the field, and the plank bridge which spanned it was of quite sufficient width to allow Amy's little cart to carry her safely over, and taking a book she would spend many a happy afternoon in her chosen solitude. Amy was very fond of her brother, and it pained her affectionate little heart to hear him blamed for a fault she was too young to know the danger of.

Frank used to work for me frequently. He was very handy, and I liked him for his loving care of his crippled sister.

Many were the lectures I used to read him on his besetting sin, and he always listened most respectfully to all I used to say, although I well knew that the impression would wear off almost as soon as he left me. I heard of an excellent situation for Frank about three miles from where I resided, and I was pleased to obtain it for him, although I felt it my duty to warn his master of his peculiar habit. Mr. Jones said that "if he was a good workman," (and no one could deny that,) "he would engage to keep him strict to his duties." So Frank was hired at liberal wages, and came to thank me for what he called "my generous interposition in his behalf."

As he left my house, I told him that before he left for his new place, I felt very anxious that he should examine the railing of the bridge over which his little sister went every day, as I had remarked, the last time I walked that way, that it was very unsteady. He promised me to see to it that very evening, and for once I felt sure he would keep his word, for I well knew that he would attend to anything likely to endanger his darling sister. Frank left, and I did not see any of the family for several weeks, owing to my absence from home; but heard upon my return that Amy had been very ill; so one beautiful afternoon I thought I would walk to the cottage and see her. As I wished to call on a lady, instead of going straight there, I went by the fields, so that I would reach Amy's cottage by the grove, and thought it even probable that I might find her in her favourite resting place, as she was well enough to be out, I was told.

It was a lovely afternoon; the birds were singing, and the merry hum of the bees mingled with the gurgling of the rivulet which emptied itself into the stream I had to pass over in order to reach Amy's cottage. The thought struck me as I

walked along whether Frank had attended to my request about the railing of the bridge; and some strange presentiment seemed to take possession of me, which I vainly endeavoured to shake off. I could not account for the feeling. I was in my usual health and spirits, and everything around me was teeming with life and beauty. I sauntered slowly along under the trees, for the afternoon was very hot, and I felt unwilling to emerge from their grateful shade. I came at last in sight of the bridge, and the first thing I saw was that it was unprotected by any railing. Hastening on, I found, to my horror, that the little cart in which my Amy used to ride was in the water, and when I stood upon the planks I could plainly distinguish the little girl herself lying at the bottom of the stream. The cart had evidently run against the rail, which had given way under the pressure. It was the work of but a few minutes to draw Amy from her watery grave, for it was not deep, and almost any child could have got out, but Amy, being a cripple, could not extricate herself, and consequently was drowned, for life must have been extinct some time ere I even reached the grove.

There was no person near, and I felt unwilling to leave the little corpse until some one could be sent to carry the sad news to the mother's cottage. Fortunately a boy passed just then, who was looking for some sheep, and it struck me in an instant that it was his carelessness which was partly the cause of the accident. The sheep had probably rushed over the bridge at the same time with Amy, precipitating her conveyance into the water, by tearing down the unsteady railing. I despatched the boy for help, which was soon sent, and Amy was borne home to her mother. Of course her agony was dreadful to witness, and she told me that “Frank was coming home the

very next Saturday, having obtained a holiday for the express purpose of mending this railing, for he said he had no time to do it properly before he went, and he felt quite sure that it would not break down by that time," and probably it would not if the sheep had not gone over it. But it was Frank's place to guard against any accident happening ; but, with his usual procrastinating carelessness, it was put off till a more convenient season, thus proving fatal to the darling sister, for whose life, I believe, he would willingly have given his own. Of what avail now were all his self-reproaches ; his remorse, as he hung over the corpse of his darling ? But even then I felt sure he would leave the grave with the curse still clinging to him ; for he made altogether too light of a fault which had already caused so much sorrow and pain, and instead of imputing the blame, which was justly his, he sought to lay as much as possible on the boy whose duty certainly was to have kept his sheep on the other side of the stream. It was, of course, after all, mere conjecture ; the marks of their feet were by the bridge, and they were over the stream when I reached it, where they had no right to be if the boy had attended to his duty of watching them, instead of lying sleeping under the hedge. This was the amount of the evidence I gave at the inquest ; but, let the cause be what it might, the result was the death of the little girl ; that truth was there in all its painful certainty.

Frank returned to his place soon after the funeral, and I heard very little more about him. Time passed away, and he became his own master, and returned to his native town to commence business for himself. He had married a very respectable young girl, who had been servant for years in his master's family, and she made me smile the first time I saw her, by telling me that " the very day they married Frank had



actually to leave the minister waiting at the altar whilst he ran to the shop to purchase the ring, he having intended buying it the day previous, but, thinking there was plenty of time, put it off, till at last he went to the church without it.

Fortunately for Frank, his wife was a very pious young woman, and I felt sure she would try to turn his attention to something beyond the mere danger he incurred by his procrastinating habits in worldly matters. For, alas ! Frank, like many others, thought there was plenty of time to think about religion. But oh ! I ask you, are any of you too young to die ? It would take me too long to tell of all his wife's struggles to bring him to the serious consideration of the more lasting things of eternity ; but his habits were too deeply rooted to be easily erased, and he became quite angry at times when she would commence the subject. She was a very superior young woman, and having for many years attended the Sabbath school, the necessity of seeking God had taken deep root in her mind ; and she most earnestly desired that her husband should, with herself, partake of the joy and peace of believing.

Frank was exceedingly kind to his wife, and willingly granted her every indulgence his means would allow of ; he was very temperate, and shunned all bad company. This, he thought, was quite sufficient claim to heaven, like the vain Pharisee who thanked God that “ he was not as other men were.” Frank was self-righteous, and prided himself upon his freedom from all great sins, his generous actions, etc., thinking, alas ! as too many do, that his own good deeds were all-sufficient to ensure an entrance into the kingdom of heaven.

Frank Mildmay, I am grieved to be obliged to tell you, would not be persuaded of his fault, and as he grew older he grew more careless, until he was suddenly brought to convic-



tion by an accident which cost him his life. Then he would have gladly given all his earthly possessions to have been able to recall his wasted time ; maddened by pain and remorse, his sick bed was an awful lesson on the sin of procrastination. He only learned, when it was too late, the worth of the blessing by its loss ; time to him now would have been what it is said to have been to Queen Elizabeth, when, on her death-bed, she exclaimed, " Oh ! time ! time ! a world of wealth for an inch of time ! " Oh ! my dear young friends, be warned whilst time is yet yours. Seek God while He may be found, for the night cometh when no man can work.

I was with poor Frank all the night before he died ; his fevered hand grew cold in mine as I prayed with him through those solemn hours, which were so soon to close on him for ever. How painfully was the verse verified in his case, that we may not " boast of to-morrow." He went forth to his work in the morning, blithe as a lark, with no cares on his mind, neglecting, as was his usual custom, to ask God's blessing on his lawful occupation, and in a short time was struck to the earth by the fall of the building on which he was engaged. Three short days were alone left him to make his peace with God, and as I closed his eyes I could only think of the lines which seemed to me so painfully exemplified in his case :

" Time was,—is past,—thou canst not it recall ;  
Time is,—thou hast,—improve the portion small ;  
Time future is not, nor may ever be ;  
Time present is the only time for thee."

*"He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty ; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city."*—Prov. of Solomon, xvi. 32.

This verse, my dear young friends, is taken from the sixteenth chapter of the Proverbs of Solomon. Perhaps there is no book in the Old Testament which contains so many precepts admonishing youth against the exceeding folly of indulging in bad temper. Not only does it make the person who gives way to it unhappy, but it destroys the peace of a whole household. Those who do not naturally possess a good temper, or whose dispositions have not been properly trained at home, will have to endure much misery when they go forth into the world, for they will find a great deal to try them, as all do, whether rich or poor. Besides, bad temper is frequently discomposed by things as well as persons. If any little circumstance happens to cross, even when no one is to blame, every one within reach must suffer for it, as if all things as well as all people were to be in constant subjection to it. Can anything be so ridiculous as for young people, when they are corrected for any fault, to pout and mutter, an exceedingly disagreeable habit, which many girls make a practice of? If what is said is fit to be heard, it might be spoken aloud; if otherwise, nothing is gained thereby but the gratification of ill humour, and those who indulge such a temper always injure themselves the most by it. I often wonder whether young people imagine themselves to be too wise to be wrong. Any one would suppose so, to see how impatiently they listen to the reproofs of their teachers. I often feel inclined to ask how they came by their wisdom, or how it comes to pass that they already know all

that is to be known. A girl with such an unhappy temper may, indeed, torment her teacher, and occasion her a great deal of trouble and vexation ; but it will produce far worse consequences to herself, by keeping her in ignorance, and causing herself to be universally shunned. Solomon also declares, "Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit, there is more hope for a fool than him." On the other hand, good temper is its own reward, and those who are disposed to conquer an evil one may be encouraged by the verse which we have chosen for our consideration. But as I know you will feel more interested in my admonitions if made interesting to you by illustration, I will proceed to show you how much misery and unhappiness was caused in a family by one of its members, who was constantly giving way to temper on the most trivial occasions.

After recovering from a severe attack of fever, being in very delicate health, I was sent away from home on a visit to a distant relative of my mother's ; this place being selected on account of its proximity to the sea. Mrs. Fairfax had often visited my dear mother, to whom she was fondly attached, and it was during one of her visits that she offered to take me home, instead of my being sent to some other place which was first proposed. I was delighted at the prospect of enjoying a few months of the beautiful sea-breezes, and the freedom from my scholastic duties, for the doctor had insisted on all cessation from study. The close confinement to the school room had impaired my health unusually that summer, till I at last was quite prostrated by a low nervous fever ; but I forgot ill-health and every discomfort when I stepped into the carriage which was to tear me away from my hated studies.

Mrs. Fairfax must have thought she was taking some wild

girl away, but she was so gentle, and kindly allowed me to enjoy the full bent of my exuberant spirits, till they were checked by utter exhaustion. It was quite late at night when we arrived at Mrs. Fairfax's dwelling, and as all the young people had long retired to rest, I was only too glad to follow their example, although the sound of the waves dashing up by the cliffs kept me from sleeping, so anxious was I to witness their wild beauty. When I rose the next morning a beautiful sight met my eyes. Mrs. Fairfax's dwelling was situated on the summit of a tall cliff: a garden, bright with innumerable shrubs and flowers, laid just under the window, whilst the magnificent ocean rolled beyond in all its wild splendour, and washed with its foaming billows the base of the cliff. The merry voice of the fishermen, as they were preparing to launch their boats, mingling with the noise of the waves as they dashed on the shore, was music to my ears, and I could scarcely tear myself away from watching the beautiful ships whose white sails were glittering in the sunshine, to attend the summons to breakfast.

Mrs. Fairfax was seated at the table pouring out the tea, and kindly made room for me next to her, while she introduced me to her three daughters, Alice, Katy and Ellen; the two elder were twins, about fifteen years of age, while Ellen was a year younger than myself. They were all pretty-looking girls, and received me very kindly. As this was their holiday time, it did not take very long for us to get acquainted with each other, and immediately after breakfast we were sent to amuse ourselves on the beach, accompanied by an elderly servant who always waited on these young ladies.

We spent our time very pleasantly, picking up shells, jet, amber, and the different sea weeds with which the beach was



strewed, until it was time to return to dinner, after which meal Mrs. Fairfax proposed that we should amuse ourselves in the garden and plantations till tea time. But all our enjoyment was marred by Alice's temper, which she showed me for the first time; and I now found to my dismay that she was peevish, discontented, selfish and exacting to a degree, and beyond all this she was so sulky that she would not speak. This afternoon something was proposed that she did not like, therefore she would not play, or walk, or sit down on the beautiful grassy knolls, or in fact do anything we wished to do. Her sisters, used to her temper, paid no regard to her, but proceeded to their own amusements; but I had been so unaccustomed to such displays that it spoilt all my pleasure, and these freaks of temper were so often indulged in by Alice, that I was always glad when they confined her to the house. She could be the most agreeable girl when she was pleased, but that was so seldom that all our pleasure was marred by her selfishness and sulky fits.

It was about a month after my arrival that the twins attained their fifteenth year. Mrs. Fairfax always made these anniversaries gala days to them, by inviting all the young people of the neighbourhood, and giving them a pic-nic in the beautiful grounds. It was the seventh of August, and a glorious day. I had been so happy all the morning assisting in conveying fruit, flowers and all kinds of confectionery to the place appointed for our meeting, and arranging them on the rustic tables put up for the occasion. Alice had been detained in the house assisting her mother, and I was just finishing the wreaths intended to be worn by the twins, when Alice in a passion of tears entered the arbour where I was working, and throwing herself down on the grass, declared that she was the



most ill-used girl in the world. When I could prevail on her to speak, what was my surprise to hear that all this trouble was occasioned by the dressmaker, who, having received a sudden demand for mourning, had been unable to finish the dress which Alice had intended to wear that afternoon. I was so thunderstruck at the idea of a girl giving way to such a burst of passion about a dress, that I could not answer her, and all my beautiful flowers fell to the ground as I attempted to raise her up from the place she had thrown herself. All my anticipated pleasures in the amusements of the afternoon vanished as I gazed on Alice, her face inflamed by passion, and her whole frame shaking with agitation.

I tried to persuade her that no dress would be so pretty as her white one, but her anger knew no bounds, as she stamped her feet, and accused me of being jealous, lest, as she said, "she should look better than myself." Now I had never been brought up to think much about dress; our dear mother used to keep us all neat, but very simply clad, and we never dreamed of disputing her will, thinking that she must know best. Besides, girls in those days thought a great deal more of an afternoon's freedom from study than they did of their personal appearance, and I never recollect the time when it caused me the slightest anxiety. That afternoon I had never even asked Mrs. Fairfax what dress I should wear. I was too much interested in the making up of the bouquets, for which I always possessed a passion, and twining the wreaths to decorate the table. I therefore was quite unprepared to hear myself accused of harbouring a feeling I scarcely knew the meaning of. Katie and Ellen, who soon joined to assist in clearing away the litter, added their entreaties to mine that Alice would not spoil our afternoon's pleasure by giving way to such

ill temper, and tried to persuade her how much freer she would feel to enjoy her play if she was not afraid of spoiling her dress, and Katie declared "she was quite glad of the chance which prevented her wearing hers." But it was useless to talk, so we left her to the enjoyment of her evil disposition, and proceeded to the house to dress ourselves. About two o'clock the young people arrived, and Mrs. Fairfax left us to the unrestrained enjoyment of all the various amusements her kindness had prepared for us ; and happily, indeed, would our day have passed had it not been for Alice, who would not join in one game which was not proposed by herself. Some were for giving way to her, but others thought that it was unfair and unjust that Alice should rule everything. She would not be crowned, because she said "I had purposely woven the best roses in Katie's wreath." I thought I had made them exactly alike, till the difference was pointed out to me ; one or two of the roses were larger, that was all. I then proposed that Alice should take the one that she thought was the best, Katie giving up hers most cheerfully. Alice immediately snatched it out of her hand, and trampling it under her feet, declared "that neither of them should be worn." Katie submitted, as she usually did, but the peace of the day was broken ; a cloud had crossed our path, and nothing could restore the bright anticipations of the morning. And now what was the cause of this ? It is well worthy of your attention, and I do beg of you not to pass it lightly over as a thing of no moment.

The day was beautiful. Wealth contributed its means to our full enjoyment ; every luxury was at our disposal ; gay, happy, joyous spirits were there, revelling in their freedom from scholastic duties, which had so long and would so soon again bind them to the stern realities of life. Nature in all

her magnificent grandeur decorated the scene, and yet one ill spirit was the cause of all the evil there; bright smiles were exchanged for discontented peevishness; light hearts grew heavy under their burden; joyous spirits flagged, and turbulent passions and vain reproaches destroyed all the peace of the day. All this was the work of one bad temper; Alice had by selfishness and wilful discontent made us all so unhappy, that we were glad when the shades of evening called us to disperse. Many such scenes did I witness during my stay at Mrs. Fairfax's, and I was really glad to return home, for there the voice of discord was never heard; to love one another, to be kind and obliging to every one, to give up our most cherished wishes if it would benefit another, were the precepts taught us by our dear mother. Every tendency to selfishness was checked in the bud by her bright example, for she was the most unselfish of human beings.

I returned home the latter end of October, much benefited in health by sea bathing and breezes, and I trust also warned by the example of Alice to shun all occasion of grievous words, which we are told “stir up anger; for better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith.”

I have one more scene in Alice's life to relate. Although I was not eye-witness to it, I can assure you of its truth, and you will see how bitterly she was punished—how just the retribution her evil temper brought on herself. When she had attained her nineteenth year her hand was sought in marriage by a very wealthy gentleman, who, having lately purchased property in the neighbourhood, was much struck with Alice's beauty. Sir Charles Mauvee was much sought after, and Alice's triumph was complete when she received an offer of

his hand. Sir Charles was a retiring man, and of a very serious turn ; he had therefore little chance of hearing of Alice's temper, as he was by no means a person any one would have dared to approach with a tale of gossip ; and as Alice always appeared to the best advantage before him, he doubtless took it for granted she was amiable as she appeared ; but he was suddenly woken from his dream of security by a scene to which I now call your attention.

The wedding had been fixed to take place early in the spring, and Sir Charles had occasion to go to London to make some final preparations for this event, and had taken a tender leave of Alice the night previous to his departure. But something or other delayed his journey for a day, and he thought he might as well go over in the morning and spend a few more hours with Alice. As he was frequently in the habit of entering the drawing-room by the window which opened on to the lawn, he did so now. As he approached he was struck by hearing the voice of Alice, not in the soft tones he loved so well, but raised in the highest pitch of anger. So intent was she on the subject which had excited her stormy passions, that she never saw him, as he stood a spell-bound witness of the disgraceful scene. It happened that her lady's maid had been summoned to her presence about some trifling mistake in her dress, and Alice was giving full vent to her anger in words very unbecoming to a lady, when she suddenly turned round and met the startled glance of Sir Charles, whom she thought that instant was a hundred miles away.

A look in which mingled sorrow and scorn were strongly blended met her astonished gaze, but without one word of explanation he quickly vanished from the spot, leaving Alice with the comfortable assurance that he had heard every word



of her unchristian-like altercation. She sank down on the sofa overwhelmed with shame, for she felt that her fate was sealed, and she possessed now not a hope of Sir Charles ever making her his wife. And she was right. A letter was given her the next morning, in which he released her from her engagement, telling her that he dare not link his fate with one who could so far forget herself, adding that he felt God could never bless his union with her.

Thus you see how the long indulgence of evil temper ruined all Alice's fair prospects ; overwhelmed with shame and confusion, she could offer no excuse. She tried to bring pride to her aid, but as she really was attached to Sir Charles, it did nothing towards alleviating her misery, and as she grew older she became the prey to her own evil disposition. I never saw any of the family again, as upon the marriage of the two daughters and death of Mrs. Fairfax, no communication was kept up with Alice. I can now, in conclusion, only call upon you to ponder over the moral contained in this tale, and if any of you have hitherto indulged in evil temper, let me beseech you to be warned of the consequences ere it is too late. Go and learn of the meek and gentle Jesus, who, when He was reviled, reviled not again ; whose own beautiful words declare that “blessed are the peace-makers, for they shall be called the children of God.”



*“Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.”—St. Matt. v. 16.*

In these words, which form a portion of our Divine Saviour's sermon on the Mount, He exhorts His disciples so to act that they may encourage others to follow their example; for if people hear great professions made, and see none of the effect, they are not likely to admire or follow a religion from which springs no fruit. Our blessed Lord declares, “Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father.” How many bring shame on their religious professions by the way in which they make it a cloak for sin! You read how much this was the case with the Scribes and Pharisees, who by their extraordinary devotion insinuated themselves into the confidence of the people, defrauding the widows and orphans of their rights. Our Saviour addresses them as “blind guides, which strain at a gnat and swallow a camel.” This is a proverb signifying exactness about little matters, while neglecting those of greater moment, and originated in the custom of the Pharisees, who attempted with a fine cloth to strain out the small animalculæ when they took their wine, lest they should transgress the law which forbade the eating of any creeping things; they were also very diligent in cleaning out their drinking-cups and dishes for food, as required by their traditions. If you will look into the seventh chapter of St. Mark, second verse, you will find that they found fault with our Saviour's disciples, because they saw them eat bread with unwashed hands.

Our Saviour addresses them on this occasion as making clean

the outside of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess ; and again as whited sepulchres, which appear beautiful without, but within are full of dead men’s bones and all uncleanness ; and again our Saviour says, “Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites ! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of law, judgment, mercy and faith : these ought ye to have done, and not left the other undone.” It is very evident by what we read of these men in Holy Scripture, that the outward form of religion was strictly observed, but that justice, compassion and piety were quite lost sight of. Their good works did not spring from the love of pleasing God, but that they might stand high in the opinion of their fellow-men. I have now a short tale to relate, which will, I trust, prove to you that a man can spend his whole life in the strict observance of the ordinances of religion—that he can give largely of his means for the furtherance of religious objects—leave thousands to charitable institutions, and yet, after all, be found among those whom our Saviour declares will be addressed by Him in these words, “I never knew you ; depart from me, ye that work iniquity.”

In England, in one of those lovely places for which that country is remarkable, dwelt a gentleman, who, nursed in the lap of luxury from his earliest infancy, inherited at a very early age, by the death of his father, the magnificent estate which had descended for generations in his family. You who have never been in England, can form no idea of the supreme beauty of these estates. The beautiful parks with their noble trees, the streams of pure water, the hills and valleys, and rich pastures, form a scene of picturesque beauty of which you can scarcely dream. There is no grandeur in English scenery, but almost every stranger is struck by the air of quiet happi-

ness which seems spread over the whole landscape, giving you an idea of peace and rest which is seen in no other country. The gentleman who owned the estate of which I speak was a tall, fine-looking handsome man, his manners courteous and gentlemanly ; but there was with all this an austerity of self-righteousness about him, which was anything but pleasing to those with whom he came in contact. In a word, he was one of those persons who looked upon every one with the jaundiced eye of suspicion. He had resided abroad for several years, and was the father of two sons and three daughters before he finally settled on his own estate. His wife was a very lovely woman, forming a striking contrast to himself, and was regarded by him much in the same light as he looked upon his children, viz., slaves to do his will. Such strict propriety of conduct was insisted upon, that the girls were mere walking automats, hardly speaking above a whisper ; as to laughing or playing, it was considered too vulgar and unladylike to be indulged in. The idea of going beyond the prescribed routine of a regular measured walk on the broad gravel paths of their magnificent garden, never for a moment occurred to them ; to run under the trees in the park, and seat themselves beneath their grateful shade, whilst they read or worked, was a thing not to be thought of ; even to stop on the rustic bridge which spanned the lovely stream dividing the garden from the park, to feed the pet swans, would have been considered a great dereliction of dignity. Every act was prescribed by rule, and Mr. De Vere flattered himself, in his pompous selfishness, that all his belongings were patterns of rigid proprieties.

Mr. De Vere gave liberally to all charities and religious institutions, for it flattered his vanity to see a subscription list headed by his donation of ten, twenty, or fifty pounds,

as the case might be, and ascribed to his generous benevolence. His name figured in all lists for missionaries, Bible societies, hospital funds, or any other charity in which he saw himself described as the most liberal of patrons ; but his ear was deaf to the voice of mercy did it come in the shape of some poor widow, or orphaned child, who asked a small portion of his bounty ; no transgression was overlooked, no erring one encouraged “to go and sin no more.” Did he not attend church three times every Sabbath, have family prayers, etc. ? Could it be expected that he should come in contact with sin and uncleanness ; could he touch pitch and not be defiled ? The two young De Veres were at college, the daughters were educated at home, under the strict surveillance of their father, for the meek and loving mother dared not interfere. Her natural kindness would have led her to relax the stern iron rule under which her children were educated. It would have pleased her more to see her girls romping amongst the trees and flowers, their cheeks glowing with the tinge of rude health, than to see these pale misses of propriety with never a smile parting their ruby lips, or hearing the joyous laugh of childhood ringing in her ears. Poor Mrs. De Vere felt how false and hollow was the system of her children’s training, but with such a domineering spirit ruling her whole household she felt how powerless were all her efforts to stem the current on which her dear ones were floating. What were they being fitted for ? neither for time or eternity ! The system under which they lived inculcated no kind feelings of sisterly affection ; they never disputed, ’tis true—that would have been too vulgar ; they were as studiously polite to each other as to the most exalted visitors ; but to sacrifice their wishes to please another, or show any kindness which had not self for its basis, they took no pleasure in.



Nothing was natural ; everything they did was mechanical, for they were mere working machines under the stern guidance of their father and governess. A mother's tender love had no place there.

My dear father being Mr. De Vere's legal adviser, we were frequently brought in contact with these young ladies, and I remember one afternoon receiving a very severe lecture from Madame Drucourt, their governess, for daring to ask the Misses De Vere to join me and my sisters in a game of hide-and-go-seek. She gazed with great contempt on my not very tidy dress, which having in my play come in contact with the shrubs, had many unsightly rents, very visible in spite of my efforts to disguise them ; and my hair, which hung in long natural curls, was certainly guiltless of any degree of order ; my hat, which in my eager desire to find the object of my search, had fallen off, and now hung down behind, kept in its place solely by the ribbon attached to it. Madame was horrified, and contrasting the young ladies' spotless dresses and elegant French hats with my appearance, proudly demanded "How I could presume to suppose that they would be allowed to make such figures of themselves ?" The poor girls' pale faces certainly was a sufficient guarantee that a healthy game of romps had never been included in their catalogue of proprieties ; and although I was not in the least ashamed of my play, I must own to feeling a little, when the contrast of my appearance was made so palpably visible to mine eyes by Madame Drucourt. Yet in the shame of this I could not help feeling certain, that it would have been long ere our dear mother would have dressed us up like dolls, and sent us to make morning calls with our governess. It was some weeks after this visit that I met Mr. De Vere coming up the garden with a pale face and bewildered manner. He addressed me with



his usual overwhelming politeness by asking if my father was at home? adding, that “he had called at his office but could not see him.” I knew my father was just then in the orchard with the gardener, superintending the planting of some trees, and I offered to go and call him, requesting him to walk into my father’s study whilst I did so. With all his pompous politeness, which he never lost sight of, I could see that something had gone wrong with him, and concluded, in my usual hasty manner of deciding, that some of his human machines had most likely got out of order, so he required legal advice. I was only too glad to escape from his stern sense of propriety, which led him to overwhelm even a child with it, and quickly sent my father to his rescue.

What transpired between them I did not hear for some time, but it appeared that his two sons had been leading a very reckless life of extravagance and folly at college, and in consequence had been both expelled. The disgrace to a man of Mr. De Vere’s strict propriety was dreadful, and in his anger he swore, that “he would never receive his sons home again.” In vain was he advised that, however culpable their conduct, that that was not the way to reform them, but only likely to drive them to further acts of desperation. It was not the sin in the eyes of God which was the sting to this proud father, but the disgrace in the eyes of men. He who had always been noted for such strict justice, such fair dealing, to have dirty, shabby bills sent him from the Jew money-lenders, who, knowing his wealth and pride, gladly lent on such sure security to the reckless youths, who, freed from the severity of their father’s eye, only too willingly borrowed and spent in idle and boisterous dissipation large sums of money which they obtained so readily, and it was not till an order expelling them from

college reached them, that they awoke to the fear of their father's just anger.

Nothing could exceed the fearful wrath of Mr. De Vere, as bill after bill was sent, demanding payment. He would listen to no reasoning. Could he then have been made to look his own error in the face, what amount of suffering might he not have escaped ! But no ; he had bowed to the world ; the opinions of men had always swayed him ; he had never sought mercy from God ; why then should he show it ? His sons had disgraced his name, and involved themselves in debt from which no hand but his could free them. What right had they to ask or expect pardon ? What was their bitter penitence to him ? Could it wipe away the stain on their name ? No, they had wilfully brought shame on it, and now they must abide the punishment. In vain did Mrs. De Vere try to persuade him to reverse the dread decree which exiled her sons from home. The fond mother's courage rose as she pleaded for her boys, for she felt how much of their error was to be attributed to their father's false and hollow system of education. It had not fitted them to be launched into all the gaieties of college life. They had been, 'tis true, liberally provided with pocket money, but it was because it must not be said that the young De Veres were niggardly supplied ; and they were generous on the same principle, and not for the good they might be enabled to do with it. Religion at home had never been presented in its own pure, attractive form ; consequently, at school it was neglected just in proportion to the opportunities of eluding the vigilance of the teachers. Is it to be wondered at that these young men fell into temptation, the real sin of which had never been implanted in their hearts as a path to shun ?

Mr. De Vere, in the midst of his anger, paid without a single deduction his sons' liabilities, which amounted to three thousand pounds, but he sternly warned the creditors that it would be the last time. Then, with a heart in which pride and anger held undisputed sway, he sat down and wrote his sons' dismissal from his roof as coolly as if he were asking them to dinner. He named a sum for which they might draw upon him annually, but added, that if it were overdrawn at any time, the whole would be discontinued.

Thus the sons were exiled from their home, and the father was seen, as usual, in the house of God, the most devout listener there, the most constant and attentive attendant on all its sacred ordinances. But did his conscience never smite him as he prayed “ Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us ? ”

The young men, on receiving their father's letter announcing their exile, had written to their mother, saying that “ they intended going to sea and endeavouring to carve out for themselves such a name as might perhaps be the means of obliterating all remembrance of their youthful folly.” They had not erred from a real love of sin, but for lack of that inherent principle being ingrafted on their minds which would have kept them from falling ; but this the father could not see—hence his stern, unrelenting denouncing of his sons.

Nothing was heard of these young men for nearly three years, and then news reached the parents that they had both perished by shipwreck. What Mr. De Vere felt he made no sign of ; he still continued the same stern administrator of justice, the same liberal subscriber to all religious institutions, the same arrogant stickler for propriety. The heart-broken mother silently and uncomplainingly drooped away ; her fond heart

had clung through all the disgrace to her erring boys ; for is it not a well-known fact, that

Years cannot change, nor worthlessness remove,  
Nor guilt impair, a mother's holy love ?  
It twines around the most ungrateful heart :  
Tho' thankless all, it will not thence depart.

Mrs. De Vere's silent suffering was painful to witness ; there was no sympathy with her grief, and all felt that death was a mercy, bringing her the peace she knew not on earth. Few knew until she was laid in her grave her gentle charities, of the kind and loving sympathies that had sought to lead the erring back to the path of virtue ; no one feared to go to her, although they shrank terrified from her pompous husband ; hers was a religion to be felt, his to be seen ; she condemned the sin, he the sinner ; she spoke kind and gentle words to the penitent, he crushed them with the weight of his wrath. He stood aloof, for who would dare to accuse him of any wrong ? Could he not pray, " Lord, I thank thee that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers ; I fast twice in the week, and give tithes of all that I possess ? "

But who can tell what feelings wrung his heart with anguish as through the long, dark, wintry nights he wrestled with his great sorrow ? His pride was wounded in the most sensible point as he remembered that he had now no son to inherit his beautiful domain. His very name must sink into oblivion, for the eldest son of his sister would inherit what now appeared to him invested with threefold value, and, what was still more repugnant to him, he was the son of a gentleman whom he hated with a bitter hatred, for he was one who had made him feel his superiority. A man of no particular standing in society, with not a tithe of his wealth, making him feel that his



superior was there, was not to be borne, and now his son was the sole heir to the inheritance of his lost children. He had no power to will it, for it was strictly entailed on the male heirs ; and he felt all the punishment of his own unrelenting pride and anger. Had he not exiled his sons from home ? Had he not coolly consigned them to death ? Could anything have power to erase this cruel knowledge ? He tried to deaden “the still small voice,” but it loudly asserted its power. What were the few thousand pounds spent by his sons, to a man of his wealth ? He recollected, when a lad at college, having fallen into a similar error ; his dear father not only paid his debts, but had affectionately pointed out his error ; no word of harshness in his reproof ; and in order to prevent his again falling into temptation, he had generously increased his allowance. Why then had he acted so differently ? He punished his sons, not for the actual sin, but merely because his pride was wounded, his strict ideas of propriety outraged ; in a word, the world would know that his sons had dared to act as other men’s sons—as the common herd. This so hardened his heart that he hushed the soft pleadings of nature, and turned a deaf ear to the gentle voice of the meek and loving mother. But now conscience asserted its power, ruled him with an iron rod, and the strong man was as a willow bending beneath the blast. The satisfaction of seeing his sons carried with all the pomp of pride to the family vault, and their names inscribed on the storied urns was even denied him, for the wild waves had sung their requiem as they sank to rise no more.

No one could tell the anguish this man endured—he bore it alone ; pride raising a barrier between him and the world he worshipped, no one dared to whisper a word of comfort or peace, for they felt that their sympathy would be spurned. He



sought a balm for his misery by willing large sums to the different charitable institutions, thus making, as it were, terms with the conscience which maddened him. It might gratify him to know that after his death his name would stand forth in these charities as a liberal donor, but would it have power to deaden the gnawing worm of self-condemnation, or quench the fire which was consuming him ?

“How had his light shone before men ?” Had it turned one from the error of his way ? Had it soothed the bed of sickness ? Had it whispered of mercy to the erring ? No, his pompous pride had driven all from him. His anger had crushed the penitent. He had shown mercy to no man, and he had no right to expect that which he had always denied to others. He was indeed reaping fruit of the seed he had sown. The stern proud man wrestled long with the mighty power, but it did not humble him, and he sank into his grave without one to mourn his loss, and his beautiful estate passed into the hands of his nephew, who, being brought up by one who feared and honoured God, so uses his wealth and power, that in the happiness he diffuses around him, he so lets his light shine before men, that they acknowledge the goodness of God and glorify and praise His holy name.

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“*Thou God seest me.*”—Genesis xvi, part of 13th verse.

These words, my dear young friends, which have been chosen to form the subject of this tale, were uttered by Hagar when she fled from the face of her mistress, Sarai, Abram’s wife. The holy writings inform us that Sarai had dealt hardly with

her, that she fled into the wilderness, and whilst there, the future of her unborn son was told to her by the angel of the Lord ; and that Hagar called the name of the Lord who spoke unto her, “Thou God seest me.” It is a solemn knowledge for us all—from His all-seeing eye there is no escape, not a thought of our hearts can be hidden. Read what David says, Psalms cxxxix. “For lo, there is not a word in my tongue, but Thou, Lord, knowest it altogether. Whither shall I go then from thy spirit ? or whither shall I go then from thy presence ? If I climb up into heaven Thou art there : if I go down to hell Thou art there also. If I take the wings of the morning, and remain in the uttermost parts of the sea ; even there also shall Thy right hand lead me. If I say, Peradventure the darkness shall cover me ; then shall my night be turned into day. Yea, the darkness is no darkness with Thee, but the night is as clear as the day ; the darkness and light to Thee are both alike.”

How much sin would go uncommitted if we always kept this solemn truth before our eyes !—how much less of envy, and bickerings and cruel sayings and thoughts would be indulged in, were we in reality to realize this all-important truth ! I will now tell you a short tale, the perusal of which I trust will convince you, that we can have no greater safeguard in our course through life, no greater incentive to shun the evil and choose the good as this certain feeling dwelling with us—

“Thou God seest me.”

About three miles from the town where I was born, there resided a farmer, a man of great worth and respectability ; he was one of the old school, and resolutely set himself against what he called “new-fangled notions.” For instance, he always spoke of his wife as Dame Mercer, and kept his two

daughters very busy in the dairy, who were far and wide renowned for their sweet golden butter, which ever found a ready sale when conveyed by himself and dame twice a week to the town. Mr. Mercer's was the best managed farm in the neighbourhood, and on it he had two acres entirely devoted to the raising of that very superior and delicious strawberry, called "the Keen seedling." He spared neither time nor expense in their cultivation, and it was his custom, during their season, to have parties come and spend the afternoon in a beautiful garden laid out for the purpose, and eat strawberries and cream. By this plan he paid himself much better than by sending the fruit to market. Many were the parties formed to go and eat the beautiful fruit fresh gathered from the vines, accompanied by jugs of rich cream, and delicious cakes which the good dame always made for "the little folk." I recollect how we used to look forward to this season ; we were always sure of one half-holiday, and then not only did the kind farmer and his wife see us well supplied with fruit and cake at a table by ourselves, but swings were put up in the immense barn, and any quantity of clean straw spread for our amusement, and the two rosy-cheeked daughters were always ready to wait on us, and indulge us in all sorts of fun and frolic.

There was one son, a fine handsome-looking boy, but evidently possessing no ambition to be tied all his life too the plough. We heard that he was very wild and resorted to often to the town, where he made the acquaintance of some youths whom he did not dare to bring to his father's house, for he well knew that they would not suit the strict notions he entertained of truth and honour. My father had heard complaints made about him from the master of the school to which he went as day boarder, but nothing so serious as to make him

feel justified in telling Mr. Mercer. He was always well behaved, kind and obliging to us all when we were there ; his father was very proud of him, although I do not believe he acknowledged such a feeling even to himself.

It was during one of these strawberry feasts that Mr. Mercer showed my father a letter which he had received that same morning, announcing the dying state of his only sister, and her wish that he should receive her only child, a boy of about fifteen years of age. The clergyman of the parish in which she was dying wrote the letter, and mentioned the good education this boy had received both in a worldly and spiritual sense. His poor mother had nothing to leave him ; her means of support died with her ; and she now remembered the kind brother from whom she had been parted for so many long years, and had spent her small remnant of strength in trying to reach England that she might see him before she died and commend her son to his kind protection. Her strength had failed with fearful rapidity the week after she had arrived, and she found it impossible to reach her brother's house, and had gratefully taken advantage of the clergyman's kind offer to write to Mr. Mercer.

Mr. Mercer was rich in this world's goods, and expressed great delight that he was able to take his nephew. “Bless the boy,” said the kind-hearted man, “he shall never know the want of a home as long as his old uncle has a roof to cover him ; and he will just give Edward what he wants—a home companion—for I have been told he finds some who are not exactly the right ones, and this will set all things right. I will take the early coach to-morrow, and I trust I shall be there time enough to receive him from his mother, and cheer her with the



knowledge that her orphan boy shall never want either home or friend."

I thought as I listened to these words how noble he looked, although he had only a coarse hat on his head and the implements of industry in his hands. He did not allow the sorrow he felt for his sister to interfere with the comfort of his guests, and we were allowed to enjoy ourselves running about the lovely meadows, fishing in the clear streams, gathering the pretty wild flowers, and wandering through the beautiful garden which had all kinds of secret bowers at the end of the thick shrubberies; and then the crowning delight of all, to sit down in the cool arbour formed entirely of honeysuckle and roses, wherein was a table spread with Mrs. Mercer's best china, heaped up with the luscious fruit, glass pitchers of rich cream and all kinds of delicate biscuit, cake and lemonade.

To us it seemed like fairy-land. The roses and honeysuckles always smelt the sweetest, and to this day the scent of these flowers vividly recalls the memory of those days, and the delight I felt when Mr. Mercer ordered his daughters to gather "a posy for us to take home." It so happened that my aunt and godmother came to pay us a visit during this season, and, another party being formed, I obtained (upon her intercession) leave to accompany my parents and friends a second time to the strawberry feast.

We had heard previous to this that Mr. Mercer had arrived in time to find his sister alive, and, after remaining to see her committed to the grave, had brought his nephew to the home which was to be his in future. When we arrived at the farm he came out with his uncle to meet us, and kindly assisted us to alight. He won my dear mother's heart in an instant by the tender manner in which he lifted my little two-year-old sister, car-



ried her into the house, and proceeded at once to disencumber her of her cloak and hat. Every one was pleased with Frank, as he was called. He was a very delicate-looking boy, tall, slight, very pale, with large, soft, dark eyes and a profusion of silky hair, which curled close to his head. He formed a strong contrast to his cousin, which was not to the advantage of the latter, although in point of size and strength he was by no means Edward's equal.

Mrs. Mercer told my mother in the course of the afternoon “that she thought Frank would be a great comfort to them, for his mother had taken the most infinite pains so to form his principles that there seemed little danger of his going wilfully astray.” She added that “on her death-bed she had bid her son never to forget these words, ‘Thou God seest me;’ that whatever he thought, said or did, he was never to banish that conviction from his mind. Nor does he,” continued his aunt, “for I believe it constantly dwells with him and guides all his actions. I find him docile, obedient, and ever ready to oblige all; nothing seems to ruffle the serenity of his temper, no, not even the taunts of the farm hands, who call him the little saint.

I saw no more of either Edward or Frank until the following strawberry season. Mr. Mercer had occasion to leave home that day, and had left Edward to act as his representative in receiving the usual moneys charged for the afternoon's amusements. The two young lads always gathered the fruit, and I happened that afternoon to wander away from my companions, and sitting down in a shady spot near the hedge which divided the strawberry patch from the rest of the grounds overheard the following conversation between the cousins as they gathered the strawberries:—

“The people who come here,” said Edward, “are all well off,

and can well afford to pay us more than my father charges, and we who have all the trouble of picking the fruit actually get nothing."

"But if your father is satisfied with the sum paid," replied his cousin, "it would not be right for you to ask more; it would not only be a great sin, but wronging your visitors and your father as well, as they of course would suppose you acted by his sanction. And then, suppose they ask you why you charge more to-day, what answer could you make? Oh! remember, dear Edward, those words, 'Thou God seest me,' and fear to do this great wrong."

"Well, I want the money," said Edward, "and what is more, I must have it. I promised to go to town to-night with it, and I shall be expected."

"Why not wait till your father returns, and ask him for the money?"

"Because," replied Edward, "he would want to know for what I wanted it. He keeps his purse-strings too tight for my taste, and I do not choose to tell him how I spend my money."

"Your fear of your father's disapproval, Edward, should be a sufficient warning to you of the wrong you are about to commit; it is the still small voice of conscience speaking to you. Do not stifle it; you may be sure that your sin will find you out. It is stealing, Edward, and the worst kind of stealing, for you are betraying your father's trust. Oh! if you would only remember that God's eye is upon you, you would surely pause ere you plunge headlong into such a sin."

Frank stood up as he thus spake to his cousin, his pale face flushed with crimson; he looked like an angel of light trying to save some fallen sinner from sinking yet deeper into the abyss opening at his feet. Edward, however, did not reply, as

their task was finished, and taking up their baskets they proceeded to the house by a path opposite to the hedge under which I was sitting.

What influence Frank had exerted over his cousin to prevent his first design I did not hear till some three or four weeks afterwards, when, sitting with my mother one morning, I was astonished to hear my father ask her “Why she had not paid Edward Mercer at the last strawberry feast?” My mother expressed her surprise at the question, and replied that she “had done so,” and turning to her house book, showed my father the sum as charged to that month’s account.

“It is very strange,” he remarked; “but Mr. Mercer, in settling some law account that morning, had deducted the amount, saying that you had told Edward you had forgotten your purse, but would pay any time when they came into town.”

“There must be roguery somewhere,” replied my mother; and then I, recollecting the conversation I had overheard between the cousins, thought it best to tell my father, although I remember receiving a very severe reprimand from him for placing myself in a position to hear a conversation which was never intended for my ears; but as I had not repeated it to any one, he warned me not to do so now unless it was necessary.

A week after this, Mrs. Mercer called herself with the butter and eggs, instead of sending them, as usual, by her son when he came to school. My mother, by my father’s advice, informed her of the late transaction, thinking it might be for Edward’s benefit that she should know it. Mrs. Mercer received the communication with less emotion than could have been expected. She did not by a single excuse endeavour to palliate her son’s conduct. She seemed to entertain only one fear, that being lest his father should be informed of it.

She said also that "several times lately she had received but part of the payment for her farm produce from several of the ladies whom she supplied, and had until this morning always supposed it had not been paid to Edward ; but applying to a lady for some considerable arrears, she had been shown by the book that her son had received the total amount. She evidently felt very angry and annoyed at Edward's conduct, but it was very plain to perceive that the great sin did not trouble her so much as the disgrace it would be to him should his father be told of it. "For you know, madam," she said, "his honest name never had a taint."

My dear mother, in her usual gentle manner, advised Mrs. Mercer not to hide it from her husband, lest Edward, in his present security, should resort to worse means to obtain money, and bring far greater shame on them and ruin on himself. Mrs. Mercer seemed to entertain great fear of her husband, while I could not fancy any one being afraid of that good-natured, jolly man, who used to speak such kind words to children, and never came to see us without filling his pockets with apples, nuts, and sweets for the "young folk."

It would have been better had Mrs. Mercer acted on my mother's advice, but she did not, and Edward escaped the punishment so justly deserved ; although she threatened, if ever he was found again guilty of such acts, that she would no longer screen him. But Edward was shrewd enough to read in her lecture more fear of his father than anger against himself.

Mr. Mercer had himself missed small sums of money from time to time, but a shadow of suspicion as to his own son being the culprit, never I am sure, crossed his mind they rather pointed to the nephew, although, had he known how unjustly, he would sooner have cut off his right hand than have nou-



rished them. He determined, however, to watch him strictly, but could detect nothing which could reconcile the whole tenour of his life with that of a thief. That the boy lived under the shadow of that great truth, “Thou God seest me,” was evident in all his transactions. His uncle loved him fondly, but still how was this question to be answered, Why had nothing been missed before he came to live with them ?

Perhaps, had he consulted his dame, she might have opened his eyes ; but although he acknowledged her to be one of the most notable of housewives, he did not entertain that high opinion of her mental powers which could advise on such a subject ; so he kept his own counsel, as she had done hers, and it is no wonder that it worked its own evil for the boy for whom they would either of them have given their lives to save from guilt and its consequent disgrace.

Edward had too readily found both means and ways to allay the suspicions of his mother, and was very careful not to bring upon himself the reproofs of his cousin, which he was conscious he so well merited ; yet, bad as he was I feel sure he would have been shocked had he known that the pure, high-principled boy was suspected of his crimes. But soon his companions whispered how easy it would be to cast suspicion on one whom they hated, because they knew full well that he sought earnestly to keep Edward’s feet out of the snare spread for him.

Some time after this Mr. Mercer had a considerable sum of money lying idle in his house, which had been paid him at various periods by his tenants. This coming to the knowledge of the two young men who were Edward’s boon companions, they used their utmost efforts to persuade him to obtain possession of it, and join them at some place they named, and



from whence they could easily sail for America before the hue and cry could reach them.

Edward knew his father intended to bank this money on the following Thursday when he went to market, and also that he was to be absent from home one night, for so he had told both Frank and himself that morning. He now felt himself completely enveloped in the toils of these men; they knew too many of his evil deeds; and if he turned back now, they would betray him, he felt certain. He had so long listened and acted on their evil counsels, that he now felt himself powerless to resist their stronger will. Yet he could not banish from his guilty soul thoughts of his beloved parents made desolate in their old age, their grey hairs brought with sorrow to the grave by their ungrateful son, who was meditating leaving the tried love of seventeen years for the untried friendship of the wicked. The probability was, that once the money was in their possession they would leave him to struggle alone with the danger so sure to follow, with the guilt which would turn and sting him. What would it be to them, even if he were brought to the scaffold, so that they made safe their escape?

His tempters saw their power and his moments of weakness. They soon deadened the still small voice by plying him with that soul-destroying beverage which has hurled so many, and is still hurling its thousands into the deep pit of misery and crime. The night fixed upon for this daring deed was one fitted by nature for such a deed. It was dark and stormy; the thunder was loud and frequent, with lurid sheets of lightning illuminating all around; the wind howled among the trees, making weird and unearthly sounds. Mrs. Mercer and her daughters had long retired to their rooms, leaving Frank and Edward sitting by a cheerful fire in the kitchen. Frank per-

ceived that his cousin had been drinking freely, and wished to get him to bed. He felt uneasy about his uncle's absence whilst the money was in the house, and had on his own responsibility requested two of the farm hands to sleep on the premises, for he had several times during the afternoon seen two suspicious-looking men lurking about the lanes, which he felt sure boded no good ; yet he did not like to mention this to Edward, who obstinately refused to go to bed.

Poor Frank ! What would his feelings have been had he known that his uncle, whose property he was so anxiously guarding, was even then concealed in a closet in the room where the money was kept, for the express purpose of finding out whether his were the hands that robbed him. Mr. Mercer was determined to find out who was in the habit of robbing him, thinking it likely that so large a sum of money would not escape an attack. He had therefore given notice at the breakfast table that he was going out, and might not return till next day. He accordingly left about six o'clock in the evening, and returned again about eleven, entered his house without any one hearing him, and concealed himself in a closet where his good dame stored away many a dainty web of her own and daughters' spinning.

He remained there undisturbed, except from the howling of the storm, till after the old kitchen clock had tolled the hour of one ; then he fancied that he heard small stones thrown up against the window, also a slight rustling behind the heavily curtained bedstead. He was, however, determined to do nothing rashly, so waited patiently till the signal was again repeated. The door of the room softly opened, and he saw some one enter, who, in the uncertain light, he could not recognise, and throwing open the window speak a few words. The answer was

distinctly audible to Mr. Mercer : “ Throw the bags down, and we will wait for you by the other side of the sweet-briar hedge.” Mr. Mercer was just about to spring from his concealment when he was arrested by the words, “ Thou God seest me,” and to his astonishment he saw his nephew Frank, who coming from behind the bed, seized the arm of his cousin as his fingers grasped the heaviest of the bags, and exclaimed, “ Oh ! Edward, pause ere you commit this great sin. Would you rob your kind and loving father, and bring disgrace on his honest name ? I feared some attack this night, but not from you, so I was determined to guard my uncle’s property even with my life. My dear, kind, indulgent uncle, this knowledge will kill you.” “ Unhand me, Frank,” almost shrieked Edward, as he vainly endeavoured to free himself from his cousin’s grasp, “ I have gone too far to turn back now : there are those without who will stand no trifling.” “ There is One above, Edward, whose all-seeing eye is upon you ; pause ere you bring down His curse on your head—desist from this sin. I tell you I will fight till I fall dead at your feet before one shilling of this money shall be touched. Go quietly to your bed ; leave me to deal with those without. I have no fear of them ; I go forth under the shadow of God’s protection, and fear no evil. Yield, Edward, and I give you my solemn promise that your father shall never know his only son was about to rob him.” Edward was just about to answer, when, to the astonishment of the two young men, Mr. Mercer stood before them. He came to confront his guilty son. With a start and a scream of horror, Edward freed himself from his cousin’s relaxed grasp, and bounded out of the window, falling with a fearful crash on the stone pavement beneath. A frightful scream of anguish and a murmur of confused voices was all that met the ears of Frank and his uncle, and

then all was still. Mr. Mercer closed the window, and bidding Frank make no noise, but follow him, they went downstairs, and, proceeding to the place where Edward lay, succeeded in bringing him in. Not a word was spoken, but Frank saw that his uncle's face was as white as though the hand of death was on him. He compelled him to swallow a glass of wine, and forced him into a chair. Poor Mr. Mercer looked up into Frank's face, and burst into an agony of hysterical sobs and tears. Frank attempted no consolation—he felt that it was not the time, but let him weep on till exhausted by the violence of his suffering. In the meantime he despatched a man for the doctor, and, seeing that water was put on to heat, sponges, towels, etc., all put ready to hand, proceeded to examine the senseless form of his cousin. One arm hung down, crushed, broken and helpless, and a large contusion on the forehead was already swelling and blackening fearfully, and his face, inflamed from drink, contrasted strangely with the livid paleness of his lips. This, then, was the sight which met the mother's gaze as, summoned by Frank, she now entered the room. He begged her to be calm, and assisted her to prepare everything for the doctor. It was daylight before he arrived, and then to the watchers the time seemed almost interminable whilst he was examining the injuries sustained by the unfortunate young man. At last everything was done, and the strictest quiet enjoined. A strong opiate was administered to Mr. Mercer, who had never spoken; he seemed completely paralyzed both in body and mind.

It was not till some time after this event took place that I heard the particulars which I have here related, although I have written them as they took place at the time. Mr. Mercer came to my father and told him, and I heard him tell my



mother that "he never witnessed, and hoped he never should again, such anguish as shook the strong frame of Mr. Mercer, as he poured out all the pent-up agony of his soul."

Upon inquiry it was found that Edward's accomplices had left that part of the country, and in consequence my father strongly urged Mr. Mercer to keep the matter quiet ; no one was injured but himself, and my father well knew what a sense of shame wrung the poor man's heart, as he saw his honest name disgraced by his only son. He was a man universally beloved for his kind and generous dealings with all, and hard indeed must have been the heart that could have rejoiced in the public disgrace of his guilty son. He had been blessed with abundance, and his heart swelled with gratitude to the Giver of all his bountiful gifts ; so when he gathered in his harvest, like Boaz in Scripture, his young men were bid ; "to let fall some of the handfuls," and the poor gleaners in their lowly cottages blessed him as they ate the bread provided by his bounty, and prayed God to add to his store.

It seemed strange that his son should have been such a different character, but Mr. Mercer was indulgent to his only son, and probably never suspected the existence of those loose principles which so well-nigh brought him to public shame. Had Mrs. Mercer acted on my mother's advice when he kept back the strawberry money, or had Mr. Mercer confided his suspicions of Frank to his wife, all might have been well, and this last crime unattempted. But we cannot tell : it might be necessary to humble the farmer's pride of character—perhaps he trusted too much in himself. Edward's accident happened in February, and when the strawberry season came round again, he was still lying on his bed of pain ; his injuries, both external and internal, had been much more severe than was at first



thought, and the doctor told us that "he thought his recovery very doubtful: at the best, he would be a cripple for the remainder of his existence." When I went into the room to see him, I started with undisguised amazement at his altered appearance. Was it possible that this pale, emaciated being could be the bright, strong, athletic youth who used to toss the straw-stacks down for our amusement, and swing us with such untiring energy?

What a sad change for the poor young fellow! and how true it is that "the ways of the transgressor are hard." What had sin done for him? Crippled his strong limbs, crushed the arm that should have been his mother's stay in her old age, and laid him for four weary months on a bed of acute suffering, with a conscience torn by remorse which denied him all rest. He could now see, when too late, the beautiful consistency of his cousin's character—realize the solemn truth under whose shadow he lived and acted, "Thou God seest me. He felt how impossible it would have been for Frank to have acted as he did under the powerful influence of that ever present knowledge. He could scarcely bear to see either his father or cousin, so deep was his debasement. He could not but acknowledge to himself that the life of crippled uselessness before him was but a small tithe of what he deserved; and had God caused his fall to have killed him, he felt that it would have been only a just punishment for his manifold transgressions. The fond father was there to forgive, the kind cousin to whisper hope to his fainting spirit, and Edward, with God's blessing, was at last able to rest upon the gracious promise of pardon for all who seek it in His Son's name. The benign influence of his cousin fell like dew upon his guilty soul, and eagerly did he listen to

the words which proclaimed peace and pardon to the poor contrite sinner.

It was the last week in September, that, being out driving one afternoon with my brother, he proposed that we should return home by Mr. Mercer's and inquire for Edward, my brother saying that "he had heard the doctor had been hastily summoned during the last night, and had not yet returned." When we arrived, no one came out, as usual, to welcome us; so my brother said "he would drive into the barn-yard and inquire of some of the farm hands how he was." Just then the servant girl came out of the house, and said that "her master had seen us, and begged us to step in;" "Master Edward," she said, "was terrible bad; and the doctor was still there." Mr. Mercer met us in the hall. How changed he was! He looked an old broken down man. He invited us into the parlour, and told us that "Edward had been seized at midnight with a violent hemorrhage which it was impossible to check, but that he was perfectly calm and happy, if we would wish to see him."

My brother, who never could endure to witness suffering when he could avoid it, declined, but gave me permission to accompany Mr. Mercer if I wished. I did so—and when I entered the room it needed not a second glance to see that Edward was dying; there was no mistaking the grey hue of that dread shadow which always precedes death. Frank stood by his cousin's side, wiping the lips which were stained with the life-blood of the young sufferer. The poor mother was bowed down at the foot of the bed, her heartrending sobs mingling with the tears of the affectionate sisters as they knelt by the other side of the bed.

It was such a lovely afternoon, the windows of the sick room were open to the ground, and the delicious scent of roses and

jasmine was wafted in by every breeze. The rich meadow-lands, through which a pure stream of water flowed, laid just outside the garden hedge ; a pretty white rustic bridge spanned the stream, over which the rosy-cheeked dairy-maids were bearing to the house their flowing pails of rich milk ; while the sleek cows were lying almost hidden by the luxuriant grass. It seems so sad that death should enter into so lovely a scene. I remember how short a time it was since the poor invalid had played with us amongst the hay in those meadows, and had carved for us tiny boats to launch in the mimic lake. Everything was as fair and beautiful to-day ; he alone was changed ; and my tears fell fast as I gazed on the sad wreck before me.

All were silent, the groans of the poor father and the sobs of the mother alone breaking the deep silence. After a few minutes Edward lifted his hand and pointed upwards. “See”—it was the only word we could hear. That he saw something glorious I never doubted, so bright was the livid face for an instant ; then light and life faded out together, and nothing was left of Edward but the senseless clay.

Now, my dear young friends, in conclusion, I would here most affectionately exhort you all never to lose sight of the great and important truth from which I have endeavoured to draw this tale. “Thou God seest me,” should encourage the faint-hearted and deter the guilty. Let us all keep it uppermost in our thoughts ; let us not cast it away, and think that our sins are too small for God’s notice. Let us no longer walk as those who have no light ; but whether we eat or drink, or whatsoever we do, may this important truth dwell continually with us ; let it be about our bed and about our path, that we may so act that we shall not fear to say, “I am not afraid, for ‘Thou God seest me.’”

*“Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”*—St. Matthew xi. 28.

This verse, my dear young friends, is one of the most beautiful, as well as comforting, of all our Saviour's promises. Are you weary with trials and sin, borne down with the weight of your own guilt? Oh, hear this sweet invitation from our loving Saviour, “Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” Rest, the peace of God, which passeth all understanding; where on this earth can you find rest like this?—rest unto your souls. How lovely was the example Christ set us during His ministry on earth—peace and good-will to all! Should it not teach us to hush our turbulent passions, to subdue our evil desires, that we may walk in His footsteps? If you carefully read His history as related by the four Evangelists, you will there see that in every instance where sin was brought before Him how gently He spoke to the erring one, “Go, and sin no more.” “Thy sins are forgiven thee, go in peace,” were the gracious words He used to two women who were marked for their sinful course. Again, He proclaims these gracious words, “I come not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.” Is it possible that any one can be indifferent to all the promises of pardon and peace which proceeded from His mouth—the mouth of Him who spake as never man spake before? Alas! how painful is the truth that thousands reject the offered mercy. Is it because it is offered without money and without price, that it is thus cast away as if a thing of nought? Let me beg of you, my dear young friends, to ponder well over the gracious invitation of our Saviour, while I endeavour to show you what peace and happiness it brought to one I knew, who, passing through the



fiery furnace of affliction, was enabled to cast all her care on Him who gave this precious invitation.

Not very far from the town in which I resided dwelt two sisters ; they were both past the meridian of life when I first became acquainted with them. Their father had been once a very prosperous tradesman, but reverses after reverses had come upon him, till a mere wreck of his property was left for the maintenance of his widow and daughters. An only son had gone abroad some years before, in order, as he said, to push his fortune ; this boy was perfectly idolized by his sisters, and they had not ceased to mourn his absence. One sister had been married very young, but being widowed within two years of her marriage, she had returned home, and was, with her little girl, living with her mother and sister when I first made her acquaintance. She had been recommended to me by a lady as a person who would be very glad to obtain needlework, and I having, just at that time, an overplus on hand, gladly took the advantage of her wish to earn a trifle.

I was much pleased with the gentle manners of the two sisters, who willingly undertook to do my work for what I considered a very small remuneration. The poor mother was a dreadful sufferer from chronic rheumatism, which had entirely confined her to her bed for some years past. Pain rendered her peevish and discontented, but the dutiful daughters nursed her with untiring tenderness and patience, and when, at length, it pleased God to release her, regretted sincerely that their labour of love was ended. Mary and Susan, upon the death of their mother, removed into a small cottage not very far from where I lived. As they were very much respected they obtained as much needlework as they could do. Nothing could exceed



the care they took of little Lucy, who was really a beautiful, interesting child ; it would have been hard to pronounce which loved her best, her mother or her aunt. When she was about ten years of age, her mother called on me one afternoon and showed me a letter which she had just received from her brother, from whom they had not heard for years. He told them that he was on his way back, and intended paying a visit to his old home.

Now, there was something in the whole tenor of this letter which I did not like. I could not account for the feeling of distrust which seized me, for I had never seen him, and he was a mere lad when he left home. Mary talked long and eagerly of her delight in having her darling brother to live with them as a protector, and I listened attentively to her relation of all the good qualities he possessed. But Mary seemed quite to forget how many years had passed ; that the boy was now a man, and might have become totally forgetful of all those good principles which had guided him when under the watchful eye of love ; but I did not, of course, venture to express my opinion. It would have been cruel to crush all Mary's fond hopes, on the mere suspicion engendered by his letter.

A few week afterwards I heard that John Hastings had arrived, and I certainly wondered why Mary had not been over to tell me the good news ; but supposing she was so overjoyed to see her brother, I thought I would go myself and inquire for some work I was just then much in need of. As I approached the cottage I was astonished by hearing loud screams from Lucy, whom I scarcely ever heard cry, for so gently had she been nurtured that tears were almost strangers to her eyes. I knocked several times ere I was heard, and then the door was opened by a tall, rough-looking young man, whose face was so

disguised by a quantity of black hair that I could scarcely distinguish his features. Upon entering and inquiring for Mary, she came forward, and with tears in her eyes said, "This is my brother, Madam ; and I am afraid you will be displeased at my keeping your work so long, but I have not felt well enough to finish it, but will do so as soon as possible." I expressed my willingness to wait a few days longer, and then turned to speak to her brother, who, to my astonishment, held out his dirty hand, and accosted me with the most insolent familiarity. Fearing to hurt poor Mary's feelings, I took no notice of this, but asked her "What occasioned the cries of her little girl ? for I feared she was hurt." Before she could answer me, John Hastings declared that "the little brat should be locked in the coal-cellar, for she screamed for nothing, only because he had attempted to kiss her." I remarked that "Lucy was so unaccustomed to see any one so rough, and suggested that if he shaved himself perhaps his little niece would be more reconciled to his caresses." He laughed loudly and insolently, and said that "he did not intend indulging her in any of her fancies, and he would before long show both her and her mother who was master there."

I turned to go, not wishing to prolong a scene which I knew poor Mary felt as so degrading, but it was with a heavy heart, for I already saw the shadow of shame and misery descending on their once peaceful home, and in the most painful shape, as coming from the hands of him whose absence had been mourned for years, and whose unexpected coming was hailed with such joyful anticipations. But to tell of all the wretchedness brought on the two sisters by this dissipated young man would take up more time than I could spare.

It was sad to see the once clean and neat cottage disfigured

by pipes and tobacco and all their disgusting appendages ; the little round mahogany table, which had always been Susan's delight to have shine like a mirror, destroyed by the beer spilled on it. It seemed as if John actually took a savage delight in disgusting his sisters, by bringing as much mud as possible on his boots into the pretty little comfortable room where his sisters used to sit and work. This room was kept expressly for the accommodation of those ladies who employed them ; birds and flowers added to its beauty, and proved the nice delicate taste of the sisters.

Poor little Lucy soon lost all the bright look which constituted her chief beauty ; her eyes were now constantly swelled from crying, and the gloom of fear had settled on her once joyous little face. As long as John resorted to no actual violence it was difficult for the sisters to dislodge him. He had brought home plenty of money, which, to do him justice, he was very liberal with ; he told his sisters that it was "prize money," but it was discovered afterwards that he had robbed his master, and made his escape by concealing himself on board a ship homeward bound.

A man like John, with plenty of money to spend, was not long in making friends (if the word can be so desecrated) among the most profligate young men of our town ; and many a night did the poor sisters tremble with fear, as they listened to the wild orgies of these unprincipled fellows. But such a state of things could not be endured for ever, and at last, by my advice, the sisters told him that "if he did not alter his course of conduct, that they would apply to the magistrate for protection. They asked no help from him—they were both able and willing to provide for themselves. They would gladly give him shelter if he would try to reform, but the sanctity of

their home should no longer be invaded by his drunken companions. Already,” Mary said, “several of the ladies who had so kindly assisted them begun to shun coming to a place where they were sure to meet with some kind of insolence from him. He had brought home nothing but wretchedness, and the time was now come when they felt that they owed to themselves a duty, which was, either to insist upon a different course of conduct, or his dismissal from their home.” To the astonishment of the sisters, John bore this lecture in silence, and promised to behave better for the future. Mary was so rejoiced that she came over to tell me the good success of her effort. I had so little faith in John that I feared it was but a calm before a storm; but I could not find heart to damp Mary’s sanguine spirit, for it was so pleasant to see a smile once more on her poor worn face, so I contented myself by warning her to be on her guard, and to treat her brother as though she believed his sincerity.

It was ten days after this, when my nurse, early one morning, came and told me, before I was dressed, that Mary was very anxious to see me. I immediately ordered her up stairs, when, with a burst of hysterical weeping, she told me, that “the night previous the window of their little work-room had been entered from without, and a large parcel of work, which they had only received the day before, been taken away. As it contained a great quantity of very valuable lace, it had doubtless been chosen on that account, as a great deal was left untouched.” My suspicion immediately pointed to John, but Mary said “he had been at home all night, and had not yet left his bed.” This might blind the sister, but not me. Who knew of this parcel but himself? And how easy to come down stairs in the night, when his sisters were sleeping the



sound sleep of peaceful innocence, and open the window, and make it appear that it had been done from without. Poor Mary was in despair; she saw the means of their support vanishing away, for who could trust them after this? Then, what was worse than all, their good name was sullied, for suspicion would point the finger of scorn at them. I did all to comfort poor Mary that I could, by reminding her that the God whom she served would not desert her in this her hour of trial. I besought her to seek help now where she had always sought it before; it might be that this trial was necessary for her faith; but I begged her not to give way to despair. She seemed so fearful of mentioning the affair to her brother, lest he should fancy that she suspected him, that I could not resist her earnest, tearful entreaties that I would myself come over and break the news to him—I had such a horror of this young man ever since I read his letter, there was such a tone of vulgar, low cunning pervading the whole epistle, and his appearance and conduct since his arrival had fully borne out my suspicions. I was very interested in these sisters, and the more so because they were so attached to me, and I feel sure they would willingly have sacrificed anything could they thereby have benefited me. I accordingly went over, and found John just coming down stairs to breakfast. I mentioned the affair to him as gently as possible, and for once he was as civil as his nature allowed him to be. He expressed great anger against the person or persons who had done this, and the poor loving sisters seemed to forget all their trouble in the joy of John's innocence, for in spite of all their love for him a shade of fear had crossed their minds, although it was only whispered to themselves. I must say I was not quite so easily convinced of John's innocence, for I saw, unnoticed by his sisters, a sinister smile which I did not approve



of. However, we could do nothing, and I advised the sisters to be guided by John's advice—to keep quiet about the matter. As I was well acquainted with the lady to whom this work belonged, I called, and, explaining matters to her, she agreed with me to take no notice of the loss, and the affair not being made public soon sunk into oblivion. Happy would it have been for all could it have remained so for ever; but Lucy having occasion to go into her uncle's room one morning, found a portion of the missing articles, and immediately informed her mother and aunt of the discovery. The horror-struck women were both in his room discussing the affair when he unexpectedly made his appearance.

Now that John saw that there was no need of further concealment, he burst forth into one of his fearful passions, the more violent for being so long suppressed. In vain his sisters endeavoured to stem the torrent of his wrath; having drank freely he was in no mood to listen, and maddened by the fear depicted on Lucy's face as she tried to make her escape from the room, he struck her a blow, which, in her effort to avoid, made her miss her step, and precipitated her with great force into the room below. In the confusion which followed, John made his escape, and in a short time I was with the sorrowing sisters, awaiting the doctor's opinion as to the injury she had received. A painful one indeed—her spine was pronounced injured beyond the possibility of human aid.

The absence of John restored in a measure the peace of their cottage home; but poor Mary's trials seemed to accumulate, for her sister Susan sunk under the shame and pain inflicted by the hand of her brother. Her health, which had never been very good, gave way under the pressure of misfortune, and Mary was

left with her crippled girl to bear all the burden of her increased trouble.

Nothing more was heard of John for some time, until one evening, when reading the paper, I saw that one John Hastings was in prison, awaiting his trial for some aggravated murder of which he was supposed to be the perpetrator. I wondered if Mary knew this, and felt reluctant to tell her, for it seemed to me as if her burden was already too great for her to bear. Her dear darling child had been sinking rapidly for some time past, and her death was hourly expected; but this shameful one to which her brother would surely be condemned if convicted, would it not crush her down under its weight of guilt and terror? Of course, such an event was soon made public through the medium of the newspapers, and Mary received a letter from her brother requiring her presence. Poor woman; how my heart bled for her; to be asked to leave her dying child to obey the call of her murderer (for nothing less could he be styled) was almost too much even for her endurance. She came to me, and in the extremity of her anguish asked, "whether it could be required of her to leave her child?" It was long before I could soothe her sufficiently to be able to convince her that her presence, and the example of the holy precepts by which her whole life had been guided, might be the means which God had chosen to make use of as instruments of his conversion. The poor creature, bowed down under the sense of the shame brought upon her, could only pray for the mercy which seemed to her withdrawn for so long a season. But the beautiful promise contained in the verse under our consideration bore its own fruit, by checking her grief and leading her to rest upon it.

Lucy was carefully removed from the cottage to my house, and I promised the heart-broken mother to watch over her child

as tenderly as I would my own, whilst she was forced to absent herself on the errand of mercy.

John's trial took place, and his guilt being proved beyond a doubt, he was condemned to execution. Death had always been a subject shunned by John, and now the dread knowledge that he must expiate his crime by such a fearful end drove him frantic, and it was impossible to get him to listen to the spiritual counsels of the minister, who was most faithful in his earnest endeavours to bring the unfortunate criminal to a sense of his danger. His sister Mary, strong in her love, remained with him to the last, although her poor heart was torn with agony at the knowledge of her dear child dying without her being able to see her once more. Dear little Lucy was fast sinking, but bore patiently the absence of her mother when she was told that she was trying to bring her uncle to such a state of mind as might prepare him to meet his God. I hoped that she might be spared to kiss her loved mother once more, but it was not to be. The poor little girl's sufferings had been so severe that her small remnant of strength could not last even that short time. A few hours of painful struggling, which I was thankful her mother did not witness, ended the scene, and heaven to Lucy was all in all.

Four days after her death, John Hastings expiated his crime on the scaffold; hardened to the last, he would not consider his punishment just, because he had committed the crime in a moment of passion—its not being premeditated prevented it, in his eyes, from coming under the appellation of murder. Surely he forgot that Cain, the first murderer, had killed his brother in a moment of passion, for we are told that “Cain was very wroth.” That was no excuse in the eyes of God;

he was branded as a murderer, because he had spilled the blood of his brother.

Mary returned from the burial of her brother, to be present at that of her darling child. Oh ! what a weight of grief that poor heart bore, but it did not break. Her dear Saviour's blessed invitation sunk deep into Mary's heart, and she resisted not His gentle command, to "cast all her burden on Him." She had now seen the cold grave close over all that she loved and cherished on this earth. For her sister and child she could feel nothing but certainty of their happiness ; but her brother—her dear, darling brother, whom she had so loved, whose memory had been so fondly treasured through all his weary years of exile, whose faults had been kindly and gently borne with, whose deep humiliation of position she had done her best to soothe, and whose departing hours she had watched with untiring devotedness and zeal—for him her soul was filled with the deepest anguish, for one horrid thought filled her breast—

"She deemed his parted spirit was not blest."

It was only in these moments that Mary's faith and hope seemed shaken, and she would clasp her hands in convulsive agony, as she in voiceless prayer vainly wrestled with her deep despair.

Mary survived only a few months the last sad event of her life. Consumption had marked her for its own, and she gradually sunk beneath its power. I attended on her sick bed for weeks, and thanks be to God, who enabled me to do so with all my many cares. But Mary's death-bed was a scene well calculated to instruct and improve any person, so strong was her faith in the Gospel promise. I was with her in that awful



hour of mingled hope and fear when her soul took its disembodied flight. Peace had descended on her heart again, after hours of struggling with the tempter's power. Many a text from the Holy Book had I read to her that night, but not one could brighten the eye and cause the lips to smile equal to that which I, at her request, repeated as the breath faintly departed —“Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”

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*“Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow ; they toil not, neither do they spin : and yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.”—St. Matthew vi. 28, 29.*

These words were addressed to His disciples by our blessed Saviour whilst preaching his sermon on the Mount. How simply beautiful is the language in which this discourse is clothed throughout ! how mild, yet how solemn, are the precepts contained in it ! These beautiful lilies of which our Saviour speaks are found among the wild flowers of Palestine, delighting travellers with their profusion, beauty and fragrance. It is a spring flower, and appears in all parts of the Holy Land. They are often alluded to in the Old Testament ; they formed part of the ornamental work of Solomon's temple ; are employed as a symbol of loveliness, and applied to a bride in all her various perfections. Did you ever see anything made by man, however useful, beautiful or wonderful in itself, that could in the slightest degree bear comparison with either a blade of grass or the leaf of a tree or flower ? If you could only examine them through a microscope, you would be struck



with astonishment at the regularity and delicacy with which every leaf is intersected by tiny veins ; the more powerful the magnifying power, the more perfect you will find the work of the Creator's hand. How beautiful must these lilies be, for you hear our Saviour declare, "That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these." "They toiled not, neither did they spin;" but, fresh from their Maker's hand, they stood unrivalled in the exceeding delicacy of their beauty.

It is evident, in this part of our Saviour's discourse, that He wishes to impress on His hearers the exceeding folly of taking too much thought about adorning the poor frail body—alas! but too often at the expense of the immortal soul. He exhorts them "to seek the one thing needful, the rest shall be added unto them." It is a lamentable fact that the young people of the present age pay too much attention to the outward adorning of the person, which but too often serves to distract their attention from their more serious duties, and creates a great deal of trouble in our Sabbath schools. Every child, no matter how poor the parents, or what their station, must have flounces and feathers and flowers, their little red fingers disfigured by paltry rings, till their attention is so concentrated on their appearance that their teacher finds it next to impossible to fix their minds on the all-important lessons for the day. And "I have nothing good enough to wear" is the too frequent excuse made for staying away Sunday after Sunday, thus losing all the good taught in their schools.

But as, in my illustration of the Tenth Commandment, I showed the danger of this love of dress, and what it led to, I will now endeavour to prove to you that, though it may not always lead to the crime of theft, it may equally work disgrace

and ruin to those whose station in life renders it highly unbecoming.

Alice was the only child of a Mr. and Mrs. Sheppard; they resided in the same town with myself, and kept a store for the sale of toys and all kinds of fancy articles. Three little ones had passed away from their earthly home, and Alice, being born some five years after the death of the last, seemed to the parents a gift of such inestimable value that the mistaken idea took possession of both her parents, that every indulgence was necessary to keep this treasure from following their lost ones to the grave. She was a fine, lovely infant; but could her fond parents have seen her future revealed, they would, I think, have rejoiced to have laid her to rest under the sod which grew so green on the graves of their lost ones. But we will not anticipate. When I first settled in this town Alice was about eight years of age, a bright-looking girl, but totally spoiled by the foolish fondness of her parents; she was a regular little tyrant, fully aware of her power, and making everything and every one in the house subservient to her capricious temper.

One afternoon, having a little niece staying with me, to whom I had promised a doll, we walked down to Mrs. Sheppard's store in order to purchase one. Mrs. Sheppard showed us a great variety, and Nellie chose a large dark-haired wax one, and I was just about to pay for it when Alice, with a scream, rushed from behind the counter, and snatching the doll from the little girl, declared that mamma should not sell that one. Of course I expected that Mrs. Sheppard would insist upon Alice restoring the doll, but to my surprise she only began to urge my niece to choose another, saying that "she did not think Alice would care for that particular doll, as she had so many,"

and then proceeded to coax Alice to give it up, promising her any other article in the store instead of it ; but Alice resolutely refused to part with it, and commenced to cry and stamp, causing the silly mother to give way to the determined spirit of her wilful daughter.

This is but one instance out of many which I could relate of the pernicious effects of Alice's bringing up ; her fits of passion would be so frightful, if contradicted, that her parents were absolutely afraid of her, and yielded (although they were conscious it was wrong) rather than bring on one of her much-dreaded fits of ill-humour.

She at a very early age displayed great love for fine dress, and so ridiculous did she make herself appear at times, that she always reminded me of the fable of "the daw with peacock's feathers." Often, in gratifying this fancy, she would spoil articles of value which she insisted upon having out of the store. At last her parents found it impossible to check the evil, and resorted to all kinds of deception to guard their property from their rapacious daughter.

As years rolled on, Alice's love of finery increased, but she displayed no taste, and only made herself a laughing-stock. A variety of colours, with flowers and beads and rings, were so profusely used in decorating herself, that she used to look like a walking parterre. Alice was very handsome, as far as regularity of features and a profusion of silky hair could render her so ; but her beauty, in my opinion at least, entirely depended on her temper for the minute. The demon of discontent sat too often enthroned on her brow to make the general expression pleasing, she also had a habit (very common with young people) of scowling when spoken to, which at times made her ugly and repulsive-looking. Her character was a mixture of

pride, vanity and selfishness, and as she never would endure the discipline of a school, she grew up ignorant in mind and unformed in manner.

As the town enlarged, several opened fancy stores, so Mr. and Mrs. Sheppard no longer monopolized this particular branch of trade, and few cared to deal where they had no security against the article chosen being appropriated by Alice, did her sickly fancies tend that way. It would be impossible for me to tell of all the follies perpetrated by Alice, or I should fill a volume, or what unhappiness she created at home by her selfish whims and insatiable wants. When Alice was about eighteen years of age, a rumour was afloat that Mr. Sheppard was on the eve of bankruptcy; creditors became pressing, and one morning the poor man was found dead in his bed. “Apoplexy” was the verdict rendered, but remorse and a broken heart would have been a fitter one.

Upon examination of his affairs, it was found that the widow and daughter would have been left entirely destitute had it not been for the sum of three hundred pounds settled on Alice by her grandmother. This would have enabled them to go into some small business, but Alice would not hear of it, and Mrs. Sheppard, having no will but that of her daughter, gave up after a few faint attempts to change her resolution. As Alice cared only for herself, it was not to be expected that her grief for her father’s death would outlive his interment, her chief concern being to have her mourning made handsome and becoming. I happened to be at the dressmaker’s at the time Alice was ordering her dress. I had just lost a dearly loved sister, and deeply regretted the cause which obliged me to resume the sad garb which I had so lately cast aside. There stood Alice, without one apparent feeling of grief for the indulgent father



visible in either look or manner. She wore out the patience of the workwomen by orders given and countermanded almost in a breath ; she was clamorous in her desire to have her mourning made the first. In vain the dressmaker pleaded prior claims. Alice gave but one answer—either do it, or some one else shall.

During the period of mourning, Alice could not so well indulge her love of finery ; therefore she soon cast it off, as too sombre for her taste. Her money was melting away apparently without procuring any comforts, for Alice found it impossible to obtain credit for the numerous fancy articles which she chose to fancy were indispensable to her happiness. Her time, which ought to have been spent in endeavouring to assist the overtasked mother, was devoted to dress and visiting among those who made her the butt of their idle jokes, which she was too ignorant to perceive. It soon became evident to Mrs. Shepard that something must be done, ere Alice had entirely frittered away every sixpence of her three hundred pounds ; but how to find any plan suitable to Alice's wishes was the great difficulty. When consulted, she only pouted and declared that "she had a just right to spend what was her own in any manner she chose."

She never considered how much of her vain, selfish folly had contributed to ruin her father, and I fear her mother never acknowledged to herself how much of her injudicious indulgence had done towards the consummation of the evils brought on her by her daughter.

Parents might as well expect to gather grapes off thistles, as to expect comfort and obedience from a child when they have withheld the rod of correction, and suffered all the wilful sins of the natural man to go unchecked. Like the summer rill swollen by the heavy rains, it rushes on its impetuous course



till all are overwhelmed under its mighty power. Thus it was with Mrs. Sheppard. She saw, when it was too late, all the guilt of her own mismanagement ; she found it totally impossible to get Alice to consent to any project, however necessary and reasonable. Want and ruin stared them in the face, and the poor weak mother sunk into an utter state of despondency, which terminated her existence in a few months.

It would not perhaps be fair to say that Alice felt no grief for her indulgent mother, but as it was unaccompanied by remorse for her own undutiful conduct, its violence soon abated, and she fell back into all her habits of slothful indolence.

Alice soon found, now that she had no mother to protect and shelter her, that her friends quickly deserted her, for they feared her asking help, which they were by no means willing to grant. Rent and provisions had to be paid for, and Alice saw her few pounds melting away. Her landlord, finding out how matters stood, gave her notice to quit, and where was she to go ? In the days of her prosperity she had never, by any act of kindness or generosity, given herself a claim to any one's hospitality. She had never given herself the gratification of one good deed ; she had sneered at advice, and set the opinion of the world at defiance. She was too slothful to work, but, driven by dire necessity, she applied for a situation with a lady whose servant having left her in the midst of sickness, readily engaged her, when at any other time, I feel sure, she would scarcely have given her house room ; but being herself in great need, a hasty bargain was made and no questions asked.

As Alice could work when she pleased, and saw no alternative between it and starving, she did pretty well for a time, but when she again cast off the symbols of mourning, her old love of finery returned with the opportunity of display. Her mistress

remonstrated in vain with her against a habit likely to be so pernicious to her well-doing. But no persuasion could alter her mode of dressing ; in other respects she gave no cause for complaint. Here Alice might have remained, had not her mistress engaged a young girl to assist in the nursery, whose head she filled with such nonsensical ideas of fashion and dress, that her mistress was forced at last to part with her, which, however, she did not do till she had used every effort to induce Alice to discontinue the evil. Alice found it next to impossible to get another place ; her tawdry dresses, feathers and mock jewellery, so spoiled her appearance of respectability, that no one would hire her. At last she went to the City of N—— about nine miles from the town, and I lost sight of her for some months, although I knew she had taken service at a low tavern, where her appearance would not be much regarded so long as she did the work required.

It was whilst there that Alice contracted that dread disease, small-pox, and as she never would be vaccinated, of course she had it in its worst form. Never having laid by a sixpence against the hour of need, she was sent to a house outside the city walls, called the Pest House, where all cases of small-pox were nursed. Here the poor girl endured all the horrors of this frightful disease, without one friendly hand to moisten her burning lips. The hired nurses were neither tender nor kind, and many a life, I feel sure, was sacrificed to neglect. It is a disease from which all, even those who love you, will shrink with fear ; what, then, must it be for those who, like poor Alice Sheppard, had no friend ?

She recovered, however, but such was her state of frenzy when she saw all the beauty of which she was so vain lost in the frightful seams of this dread disease, all her beautiful hair

shorn off close to her head. that they were forced to put her under restraint to prevent her laying violent hands on herself. She sunk at last into a state of moping idiotcy, from which she never recovered ; she was perfectly harmless, and the Poor Guardians had her removed to the House of Industry, where I used occasionally to visit her. She spent all her time in twining dirty pieces of ribbon round her neck and waist, and would pick up the feathers dropped by the fowls, in order to stick them in an old straw hat, which was her delight to place upon her head when any one went to visit her ; the ruling passion strong even in madness.

This, then, was the sad end of Alice ; and may her fate, my dear young friends, strike deeply into your minds, that you may shun the folly which ended in her ruin. Do not imagine that I think you should pay no attention to your personal appearance. To be neat and modest in dress is a duty we owe to society as well as to ourselves, but it is too often lost sight of in the eager desire to possess what is neither fit or becoming our station. Much time and money is spent in the outward adorning of the perishing body, which must go down into the darkness of the grave, while the immortal soul, which ascends to God, is but too often neglected. I do not mean to say that Alice would never have had the small-pox, or even been left an idiot, had she never loved dress ; but of this one thing I am certain, she might have had a home in her great need, because she could have paid for one ; but all her means were spent in adorning, or rather I should say disfiguring, her person, which nature had made lovely, till her claims to respectability were but too frequently doubted.

Let me now, my dear young friends, in conclusion, exhort you to listen to the voice of your parents. Happy for you if

they spare not the rod of correction. God gives every parent authority to keep their children under subjection, and if they wilfully transgress this law, they will surely find to their bitter cost,

“How much sharper than a serpent’s tooth  
It is, to have a thankless child.”

Children know right from wrong at a very early age, and although their little hearts may rebel even against the punishment they know to be just, they grow up with a respect for their parents’ word which the spoilt child never does, and they are the first to sting by their ingratitude the hand which has indulged them. Let me then ask you to read over carefully the beautiful discourse from which this tale is written. Let us not seek to dress unseemly the frail body which must—and we know not how soon—lie down in the dust, but rather earnestly endeavour ourselves to fit the soul for the robe of immortality, remembering our Saviour’s declaration, that the humble lily of the field is more glorious in appearance than was Solomon in the midst of all this earth’s splendour.

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*“As the cold of snow in the time of harvest, so is a faithful messenger to them that send him.”—PROVERBS OF SOLOMON, xxv. 13.*

This verse for our consideration this afternoon should impress on your minds the necessity of being faithful to any trust reposed in you, whether it taxes your generosity, honour, or simply your memory. God entrusts us all with talents: to some He gives wealth, to others health, to others plenty of time to spend in doing good, and all these he will require at our hands.



Memory is another talent which all young people would do well to cultivate. How often do we hear the words, “Oh! I forgot;” and how often have the most serious consequences been the result. Young people have so few cares; they are provided by their parents with necessary food and clothing—is it not then preposterous to hear them, when they come to their Sabbath school, allege as an excuse for the non-performance of their duties, that “they had forgotten?” This carelessness is the cause also of the losses we sustain in our Sunday school libraries—“I forgot to bring it, or I forgot where I laid it,” being the frequent excuse, till at last the book is lost altogether. I wish I could impress on your minds the privileges you enjoy by the loan of these books. If I could make you think of it as a real good bestowed on you, you would be more careful, and the loss to our schools would be but trifling. Another thing, every one should endeavour to deliver carefully any message entrusted to them; much serious mischief has often been the result of the contrary. The tale I am now about to relate will, I trust, convince you that you cannot attach undue importance to this subject.

Clara Vincent was a young girl who used to visit a great deal at our house; as she had no mother, she was more with us than any other young lady in the town. She was very good-natured and kind, but the most careless girl about remembering anything that I ever saw. “O! I forgot, quite forgot all about it,” were the words constantly used by her, till not one of us ever had the slightest confidence in her promises. So inveterate was this habit, that she was generally looked upon as untruthful, yet she was not so; she had as great a horror of falsehood as any of her companions, and fully meant to keep her word when she promised, but she was careless of exercising



her memory—consequently her word could not be depended upon, and you will hear what baneful influence it exercised over her future life. Having no mother to guide her, Clara was certainly very much to be pitied. Her father, immersed in business, could not be expected to see those faults which require the ever watchful eye of a mother. Clara had also been much petted and spoiled by the old nurse who had had the care of her from her birth, and who could not bear to hear her blamed by the very excellent governess who was procured to teach her ; so, unfortunately for Clara, she was left too often unrebuked for this serious fault in her character. I remember, when I used to spend the day with her, she would constantly be running to ask the old nurse to find such and such a thing which we required for our play, Clara not being able to recollect where she had left it ; our enjoyment would be marred by this, as half our day would be spent looking for articles which she had first misplaced, and then quite forgotten. It would have been well for her had she been required to find the articles she had lost, but her old nurse was always ready to wait on her darling, till Clara thought there could be no occasion to think for herself. Her governess used to talk very seriously to her pupil upon this subject, for, said that excellent woman, “ A life might be lost, through your inveterate habit of careless inattention to what you promise.” Alas ! how little did Clara then think that her governess’s warning would not only be fulfilled to the very letter, but that it would be a life-long cause of misery to her and one connected with her.

It was when Clara had attained her sixteenth year that the clergyman who succeeded the one who had been minister ever since we were children, commenced to establish Sunday schools in his parish, and Clara, who really was a very clever girl, had

a class assigned her. She was very much attached to her pupils, and they would have been to her, I feel sure, but for the bad habit which I am sorry to say had only increased with her riper years. I had been married and away from home for some time, but was spending a few weeks with my mother, when, on Sunday morning, I accompanied my eldest sister to school before the morning service. I wished much to see Clara ; but as she had not yet arrived, I sat down close by her class, and the following conversation soon convinced me of the truth of what I had heard, viz., that her ruling fault was by no means lessened by her riper years.

“I am to have a new Bible to-day,” exclaimed one of the little girls, whose bright eyes sparkled with delight at the anticipated gift. “Who told you so?” inquired one of her companions. “Miss Vincent said so last Sunday,” replied the child, “because I learned all those extra verses.” At this, almost all the class burst out laughing, and one of the elder girls declared that she stood small chance of her Bible if she had only Miss Vincent’s promise to depend on, for,” she continued, “she has promised me one for this last six weeks, and mother seems to think I never deserved it. Miss Vincent is very good to make promises, but she never remembers to perform them ; so it will be with your Bible—now see if my words are not true.” The conversation here abruptly terminated, as Clara approached her class. Only a few minutes were spent in asking after her health, etc., as I did not wish to interrupt her in her duties, I sat down, rather curious to hear what excuse she would make about the Bible. Her usual plea, “Oh, my dear, I quite forgot all about it,” was just repeated, when her eye caught mine ; she blushed crimson, but tried to assume indifference, as she sought to soothe the disappointment of the

little girl, by telling her that "she might call at her home for it on the morrow."

Now, my dear young friends, I want you just to pause here and consider how a fault like this, persisted in, in reality becomes a sin. You see the effects of it in Miss Vincent's class. Her pupils had not only no dependence on her word, but their parents were apt to think that the prizes promised and not given were in reality not deserved. Now, here were two serious evils proceeding from one cause, and both parents and children injured by it; she never possessed the respect of her pupils, because they considered the non-performance of her promises as untruthful; she also lost all influence over them, because, if they pleaded forgetfulness of any duty she demanded, they thought it injustice to be punished for a fault of which she was so frequently guilty herself. It would be impossible for me to tell you of all the misery this young girl brought on herself, or I should lengthen this tale beyond the appointed limits. I will therefore hasten to the sequel, as the consummation of the evil I wish to warn you all against.

At the age of twenty-one Clara was married to a very gentlemanly man, who had lately come to practise as a doctor in our town. He was many years older than Clara, and every one considered it an excellent match for her, as he would be likely to rule this hitherto unchecked girl. A very short time after his marriage, Dr. Stanhope found what serious errors this fault of his wife's would cause her to fall into, and earnestly set to work to root out this evil. He never spoke an unkind word, he ruled her by love, but it was almost impossible to break her of a habit indulged in for so many years. The doctor was in despair, for frequently messages left with her, requiring his immediate attendance, were either altogether forgotten, or

only remembered when some other medical man had been called in. He endeavoured, in the most serious manner, to point out the injury she was doing him in his profession, and what fatal consequences might be the result of her carelessness. Clara, who was passionately fond of her husband, would promise better for the future, only to forget it on the very next occasion.

Clara became the mother of a sweet little boy, and Dr. Stanhope fondly hoped that the necessity of being ever watchful to all the wants of infancy would in time exert an influence over the young mother, so that the habit which caused him so much distress might be obliterated for ever ; but it pleased God that Clara should pass through a fiery ordeal before she gave herself up to the serious consideration of this great fault. One morning during the doctor's absence, as Clara was walking in her garden, with her baby, now a lovely boy of six months, a poor man came through from the surgery and asked to see the doctor. His face was very pale, as he told Clara of the sudden illness of his little child—“a boy,” he said, “of the same age as the one she then held in her arms.” She expressed great sympathy with the man's distress, and said “she was sure the doctor would be in almost immediately, and she would send him.” “You won't forget, madam,” said the poor man, as the tears rained down his face. Clara bid him hasten home to his child, with the promise of sending her husband directly he came in. My sister and myself were engaged to spend the day with her, and we arrived shortly after this, just as the doctor did, in time for luncheon. Clara was all smiles, the tale of sorrow had vanished from her memory, and she was delighted to show off her baby, and compare him with mine, who was just one week older. Oh ! why did she not think of another



little innocent, who, even at that moment, was in the death struggle with that fatal disease of croup? Dr. Stanhope, in perfect unconsciousness of having been sent for, watched with evident pride the young mother as she exhibited all the beauties of her first-born. At last he rose <sup>up</sup> to go, saying "he had many patients to visit," and laughingly expressed a hope that "we should have decided upon the respective merits of our babies before he returned home to dinner."

As he went into the hall for his hat, I saw a man come with all speed to the surgery door, and pointed him out to Clara, who, to my astonishment, turned so deadly pale that I feared she was going to faint. In a minute the doctor re-entered the room, and laying his hand on his wife's shoulder, asked whether the man's tale was true, that she had faithfully promised to send him some two hours since?" Poor Mrs. Stanhope could only look the guilt she felt. "For your sake, Clara, I hope it is not too late," exclaimed the doctor, as he looked at her with a face in which grief and anger struggled for mastery. However, no time was lost then; the doctor hurried the man into his carriage and drove rapidly off, leaving us the not very pleasing task of listening to all Clara's vain repinings and self-reproaches. When the doctor returned, the words "Too late!" were scarcely uttered, ere Clara fell forward in a fainting fit. It was long before she could be recovered from it, and then so deep was her remorse that reason trembled in the balance. I remained with her some time, and as I was nursing, performed, at the doctor's request, that duty for his boy, until the mother was in some degree recovered.

Clara never forgave herself that dreadful error; she heard from the doctor that timely assistance might have saved the dead baby. He wisely spared her nothing; he told her of the



parents' revilings of her as the cause of their misery, and of his own lacerated feelings, when he found upon his arrival that through the ignorance of the neighbours, nothing had been done to relieve the little sufferer, who was just gasping its last as he entered the room. This was a lesson Clara never forgot. It was long ere her husband could restore her to his love and confidence, and a severe mental illness was the consequence. But she rose from her bed a sadder, wiser woman. She sought help where alone it could be found, and at the throne of grace humbly sued for pardon and strength to amend. As soon as she could go out, her first visit was to the mother of the dead child, and there, at her feet, she so humbled herself that the poor woman bade her rise, and go in peace, declaring that “she never now sorrowed for her babe, because she was enabled by God's grace to look on him, not as he had been here, but as he now was, a purified spirit in the realms of light, rejoicing in the presence of the blessed Saviour who had redeemed him with His own most precious blood, and had so beautifully declared that ‘of such was the kingdom of heaven.’”

When I was in England, some years since, I saw Mrs. Stanhope and her son. I could scarcely believe that the fine young man who drove his mother over to call on me, could be the baby I had nursed during that never-to-be-forgotten period of trial, which even at this distance of time makes Clara sad to think of, and never fails to send her, at each succeeding anniversary, an humble penitent to the footstool of our compassionate Saviour, trusting in His gracious promise that He “will blot out our sins as a thick cloud, and remember our iniquities no more.”

*"The Lord is my Shepherd—therefore can I lack nothing."* Psalm xxiii. 1.

The beautiful Psalm from which this verse is taken must be productive of great comfort to all those who are in "trouble, need, sickness, or any other adversity."

Our Saviour declares, "I am the good Shepherd, the good Shepherd giveth his life for the sheep;" therefore David exclaims, "The Lord is my Shepherd, I can lack nothing." How perfect was his faith! He expresses his firm conviction of being fed in green pastures, and led beside the waters of comfort; of the mercy and loving-kindness of God following him all the days of his life, so that in the end he will not fear to walk through the valley of the shadow of death, because he felt that even there God would be with him.

Oh, that we all had more faith!—how much less would our sufferings be! How pure was David's belief in God's power and willingness to lift him out of the deep mire of affliction; and this faith caused him to break forth in the beautiful acknowledgment, that as "the Lord was his Shepherd, he need not fear."

Is it not very sinful to be always repining at misfortune, which nine cases out of ten we bring on ourselves, either by our improvidence, carelessness or wilful neglect of our most sacred duties? How many, by violating the laws of nature, deprive themselves of the enjoyment of the inestimable blessings of health; others neglect to take advantage of the means given them for advancement; whilst more will spend their wealth and time in amusements debasing to both soul and body. How diligently the mass of men seek the gratification of the

senses, as if there was nothing nobler to strive for ; the narrow path which leadeth to eternal life is shunned, while thousands travel the broad road which ends in destruction.

I will now, in a short tale, endeavour to interest you in the fate of a young girl I once knew, who, being struck down in the midst of life's fairest prospects, bore with meek submission that decree which doomed her to months of fearful suffering, but who, in the midst of all, could and did exclaim with David, "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me ; thy rod and thy staff comfort me.

Ellenour Maitland was the only daughter of a gentleman and lady with whom I was intimately acquainted. She was a very lovely girl, clever and talented, and well worthy the love of all who knew her. By her brothers she was almost idolized, till she was wont to say that "she feared they would all spoil her." But she was one of those amiable characters which it seemed impossible to spoil ; she was too grateful for indulgence to abuse it, and too unselfish to wish to rule where all were willing to be her slaves.

Mr. and Mrs. Maitland were remarkably kind and pleasant people, and what the world would call religious ; that is, they were strict observers of all the forms of religion, moral and upright in conduct, just in all their dealings, charitable to the poor, and kind to all. Ellenour had been educated at home by a widow lady, whose husband had left her almost entirely destitute, rendering it necessary that she should seek some means of support, and she gladly undertook to superintend the education of Miss Maitland, who was only eight years of age when she entered on her duties. Mrs. Masters found a most amiable and docile pupil in the little girl, and seeing how she was idol-

ized by her parents and brothers, sought to imbue her infant mind with such pure Christian principles as would tend to crush all that was selfish in her nature, and fill her with loving kindness to all.

Mr. and Mrs. Maitland sought popularity ; they were very generous, but frequently did more harm by their indiscriminate kindness than good ; they could not bear to be thought unkind, therefore often relieved people when it would have been far better to send them to work, for by such means idleness was encouraged, which is the root of all evil. Mrs. Maitland was one of those persons who had not sufficient courage to say, No ! and it was well for her daughter that she was so early placed under the guidance of such a superior mind as Mrs. Masters possessed. The little girl was taught to see everything in its proper light, and soon learned to do good simply because it was her Saviour's command, and not for the praise of men. Ellenour had attained her seventeenth year before I became acquainted with her, and was, of course, emancipated from the regular routine of school-room duties, although Mrs. Masters still continued to reside with her as her friend and companion. Ellenour was so attached to her beloved instructress that her parents felt it would be cruelty to separate them. Mrs. Masters loved her young pupil with the most devoted affection ; her Christian character was the fruit of her own good training, and she felt how richly God had rewarded her labours. Ellenour was now launched into the gay world ; her beauty and talents could not fail of bringing her universal homage ; but Ellenour valued it at its own price, and infinitely preferred the quiet of her own happy home to all the gaiety of the world outside.

Mr. Maitland was very ambitious, and consequently anxious that his daughter should make what the world calls a good



match, and his pride was gratified when he found Ellenour's hand sought in marriage by the eldest son of a baronet, who had been the college friend and companion of her elder brother. The haughty baronet smiled most graciously on his elegant daughter-in-law, and the marriage was fixed to take place as soon as Ellenour should attain her nineteenth year.

Mrs. Masters, happy in the increased happiness of her beloved pupil, was most cordially pressed by Mr. Stafford to remain with Ellenour after her marriage. He could not be insensible to the value of such a friend for his young wife, or to the beauty of that religion which had done so much to form her character. Mrs. Masters could not resist Ellenour's gentle pleading, which tallied so well with her own wishes, and she joyfully acceded to a request which she felt was dictated by affection, and given in all sincerity.

Thus everything was settled to the satisfaction of all parties, and bright and happy were the prospects awaiting this young girl. No cloud darkened the horizon ; all was fair and serene ; the parent's ambition was gratified by the rank of the suitor ; the brothers' most cherished wish, that their friend should win their sister, was granted ; no jealous or envious bickerings disturbed the peace of the household. The cup of happiness was filled to the brim ; all was joy and gladness, with no shadow of fear to darken the brightness of the future.

I wish I could leave Ellenour here, secure in her happiness ; but, alas ! my task is a sad one—to tell you of all the sorrow which descended on that bright home. It was on its most cherished idol, its most lovely gem, that the storm descended, scattered at one fell blow all the fond hopes, the fair prospects, —dashing with unrelenting hand the full cup from the lips ere its happiness was half tasted.



It was just three weeks before the time appointed for the wedding that a large party assembled one morning at Mr. Maitland's for the purpose of enjoying a pic-nic in the beautiful old Abbey grounds, some seven miles distant from the town. It was a most lovely day in June, and we all started in the highest spirits, "on eager pleasure bent." I had the gratification of driving Mrs. Masters ; she was a most delightful companion, and I never saw her in such exuberant spirits ; as she talked long and eagerly to me about the bright prospects of her darling Ellenour—a theme she never tired of. She also expressed great gratitude for her own happy lot, for she told me when her husband died that she had not the wherewith to procure a meal, and now, should anything happen at any time to part her from Ellenour, that she possessed a competency which would render her independent for the remainder of her life. Her gratitude to God, the all-bountiful giver, was intense, "for had He not fed her in green pastures, and led her forth beside the waters of comfort."

We spent a most delightful day wandering about and exploring all the ruins of that romantic place. We felt an unwillingness to part, till a dark cloud, spreading over the heavens, warned us of an approaching storm, and all saw the prudence of at once endeavouring to get home before it burst.

The carriages were quickly brought, and we all started for our respective homes. The storm, however, increased rapidly, the rain descended in torrents, and the blinding lightning and heavy thunder caused more than one heart to quake with fear. Mr. Stafford and Ellenour, with her eldest brother, had started the first of all, and I, knowing what spirited horses he drove, tried to persuade Mrs. Masters that they would probably arrive home before the storm was at the worst. Mrs. Masters seemed

to be all on a sudden impressed with some sense of danger, for she fell on her knees in the carriage, and exclaimed, “O ! God, save her !” It was as much as I could do to prevent the ponies I was driving from running away; it needed all our presence of mind in this fearful storm. I knew that we were within two miles of the gravel pits, and my terror was great lest, if I slackened the reins, the ponies would in their fright run over the bank.

But before we reached the pits the storm had exhausted its fury, the thunder rolled at a distance, and the sun, bursting forth, shone with its glorious rays on a scene which froze my blood with horror. Mr. Stafford’s carriage was overturned on the very edge of the bank, and the horses were kicking furiously in their efforts to extricate themselves. Looking over the bank we saw Mr. Stafford and young Maitland bearing the insensible form of Ellenour up the steep ascent, which was not accomplished without the greatest difficulty, as it was impossible for either Mrs. Masters or myself to render them the least assistance. But at last they reached the place where we were standing, and laid poor Ellenour down on the grass, with her head resting on Mrs. Masters’ lap.

The agony of these young men was painful to witness as they gave us an account of the accident. “The horses,” they said, “had gone very quietly for a while, but as the vividness of the lightning increased, they had become altogether ungovernable, and backing down the hill with fearful rapidity, had overturned the carriage and precipitated poor Ellenour with great violence down the steep declivity into the gravel pits below.”

Assistance was kindly rendered us by the inmates of a farmhouse near, as soon as they heard of the accident ; the horses

were released from their perilous position, and a litter prepared to convey the poor unconscious girl to the home which she had left a few hours since in such exuberant spirits. Can you not fancy the agony of the parents as they hung over the insensible body of their idol child, in whom appeared no sign of life, although the doctors declared that the vital spark had not fled?

Ellenour lingered for days in this mournful state, hovering between life and death, and when she awoke, it was to the sad consciousness that she was doomed to be a helpless cripple for the remainder of her existence. Injury of the spine caused her at times such frightful suffering, that the mind almost gave way under the intensity of the anguish; and yet a murmur never escaped her pale lips. She used her most earnest endeavours to comfort her parents, who, in these words, rebelled against this dread decree: "What had she done that her young life should be thus crushed out of her?"

Mrs. Masters at this sick bed reaped the fulfilment of the promise, that "what a man soweth he shall reap." She had so hedged this young girl around with the sense of God's love, so filled her with trusting faith in His dealings, that although she left all the brightness of life for a bed of fearful anguish, yet she feared no evil, for she felt that the everlasting arms were around her, that the loving kindness of God rested with her, and that "He would yet lead her forth beside the waters of comfort."

I used frequently to go and sit up with the poor girl in order to enable Mrs. Masters to snatch a few hours' rest, for she could scarcely be persuaded to leave the dear sufferer for an instant. Mr. and Mrs. Maitland could not look on her struggles, which were such as appalled the stoutest heart; and Ellenour, in her

unselfish wish to spare others pain, would ask to be left alone ; but her faithful friend stood by, doing all that could be done, soothing her with loving words and wiping the damps of agony from off her brow. I have stood by her during these dreadful paroxysms, and prayed that her spirit might pass away in the fearful struggle. But Ellenour had yet to drink the cup to the dregs.

Mr. Maitland had some time before this entered into a speculation, which I well remember ruined many of the landed proprietors by its total failure, and in order to raise money had heavily mortgaged his estates without the knowledge of any of his family. Ruin now stared him in the face, just at the time when all the comforts of a home were needed for his suffering child. A manufacturer, who had accumulated large sums of money by trade, was the one to whom the homestead had been mortgaged. His upstart wife had long been urging him to foreclose the mortgage, as she was ambitious to show off her newly-acquired dignity by playing the lady of the manor, and her husband, a coarse, narrow-minded, uneducated man, very much under the dominion of his would-be lady wife, intimated to Mr. Maitland this intention, unless he were not paid his money immediately.

Poor Mr. Maitland, who had no security to offer in exchange for a loan, and too proud to solicit Sir Edward Stafford to afford him any relief, found himself obliged to inform his wife that their beautiful home had fallen into the hands of strangers, and that they must now seek an humbler one. Mrs. Maitland's consternation when she heard this is not to be described, nor is it necessary for me to enter into these details, as my object in this tale is merely to point out to you what faith in God's promises will do for those who trust in them, and what suffer-



ing it enables us to bear. I will therefore leave you to fancy all Mrs. Maitland felt, and proceed to tell you how Ellenour acted when she heard that she must be removed from the luxury which had hitherto surrounded her.

Mr. and Mrs. Maitland could not but feel the value of such a friend as Mrs. Masters, or the beauty of the religion she professed. It was now, when in trouble and distress, that she proved the sincerity of her love for Ellenour, her gratitude to them who had years before lifted her from the bitter waters of affliction. She insisted upon hiring a pretty house and receiving them as her guests, until Mr. Maitland should in some measure have recovered from his difficulties. She then undertook to be the bearer of the tidings of the sad change to Ellenour, which was done in such a manner that the poor girl only saw in it a fresh instance of God's tender mercy in providing for her helplessness. The removal was what all dreaded, but I was delighted to find her no worse when I went to see her the next day. What she felt in parting from the happy home of her childhood was known to none but God. She added no reproach to fill up the measure of her father's grief.

"How good God is to me," she said one afternoon as I sat by her bedside. "He surrounds me with such tender care, such loving kindness, that He leaves me nothing to ask for. Although my limbs are useless, my eyes are not darkened that I cannot see, or my ears deadened so that I cannot drink in the sweet assurance of His protecting care. If He has seen it right to unfit me for an earthly mission, may I not hope that He is preparing me for a heavenly one? My life has been such a happy one, I have been the idol of all, goodness and mercy have followed me all my days, and now that I am nothing but a burden and trouble to all around me, I am still the



object of tender care. My parents feel more what they have lost on my account. O ! how I wish they would not fret for our earthly inheritance ; how much better is the treasure God has laid up for us ! Should we ever distrust Him ? See, He has prepared a table for us here in the face of our enemies, has given us a friend when the world forsook us. Would that my beloved parents would look away from the things of this earth, to seek the inestimable joys of heaven.”

Thus dear Ellenour would talk; nothing could shake her trusting faith in God ; she bore her sufferings so meekly, trying to spare all those who loved her from witnessing what she knew full well wrung their fond hearts with anguish. As for Mr. Stafford, who looked upon himself as the indirect cause of her accident, it was found absolutely necessary to prevent his seeing her, as he could not control his feelings, and it was thought then any mental suffering increased the violence of the paroxysms. It was about seven months after the accident that I one afternoon received a note from Mrs. Masters, saying that “Ellenour had been so much worse for the last few days, that it was plain to all her strength was fast failing, and she wished me to come and see her as soon as I could make it convenient.” I had been on a visit to my mother, and had not seen Ellenour for nearly six weeks, and I was indeed dreadfully shocked at her changed appearance.

She received me with her usual smiling welcome, but her lips were already chilled with the coldness of death. Dear Ellenour was fast sinking to her rest, and joyfully did she hail the messenger which was to bring peace to the worn-out frame. I remained with Mrs. Masters all night ; her mission of love was nearly ended ; she resigned it now to a more powerful master—even Death. The doctor came about midnight, and

after a lengthened visit, I followed him out of the room and asked his opinion. I recollect his turning quickly round, and saying, while the tears rolled down his cheeks, "Rejoice that her end is so near; nothing will give me such a feeling of relief as when I hear the passing bell; one more fearful struggle, and all will be over." About four in the morning, dear Ellenour, who had been quiet since midnight, called me to her bedside, and asked me if Mrs. Masters was awake, and requested me to give her something to drink; I did so, and saw by the quivering of the lips that one of those fearful struggles was about to rend her weakened frame. I rang the bell, and Mrs. Masters was quickly at my side.

"Oh! God help me to bear it," cried the poor girl in her anguish. "Only a little while longer, darling," said her affectionate nurse; "only a few minutes more, dear, to bear God's rod, and you will dwell in His house for ever." She then repeated the beautiful Psalm from whence our text is taken. Fearful and prolonged was the struggle, but it ended at last, and poor Ellenour laid exhausted on her pillow. The usual restoratives were applied, but Ellenour never rallied from this last shock. She whispered faintly but distinctly, "I am now walking through the valley of the shadow of death, but I fear no evil; God is with me, His rod and His staff they comfort me." About seven o'clock Mrs. Masters requested me to summon Mr. and Mrs. Maitland and the two young men, for it was plain that the end was drawing nigh. Ellenour's eyes brightened as her parents and brothers approached, who, having been warned to do nothing to excite her, stood silently around her bed. It was a cold morning in January; the light of day was just struggling in, mocking the glare of the night-

lamp—the most, to me, painful time for those who keep their vigils by the bedside of suffering humanity.

Ellenour tried to speak, but the last symptom of her dread disease, paralysis of all the limbs, now asserted its power, and her tongue refused to give utterance to the loving thoughts which filled her breast. Mrs. Masters, the only one who seemed to retain her presence of mind, stood by her side, and softly repeated those comforting lines :—

“ What tongue can tell, what fancy paint,  
The moment after death,  
The glories that surround the saints,  
When yielding up their breath ?

“ One gentle sigh their fetters break ;  
You scarce can say they’re gone,  
Before the willing spirit takes  
Its mansion near the throne.”

The sweet smile of gratitude lingered on dear Ellenour’s lips as she listened to these words, the brightness of another world than ours shone in her loving eyes, the breath grew fainter and fainter, till, calmly and peacefully as an infant sinks to sleep, dear Ellenour passed away—away from this suffering earth, to the joy and peace of heaven.

I assisted Mrs. Masters in preparing her darling for the grave, and as we looked on her emaciated frame, which we had so often seen torn by the intensity of the pain endured for seven long months, we could feel naught but thankfulness that she had entered into her rest.

It is not my intention to lengthen out this tale by following the fortunes of any of the actors in it ; my object is fully effected in the patient suffering and peaceful death of Ellenour. Let me, in conclusion, urge upon you the necessity of putting

your trust in God, in exercising your faith. Remember He says, "Ye are the sheep of my pasture." What a beautiful assurance! Rest on it in security, my dear young friends, and then may you exclaim with David, "The Lord is my shepherd, therefore can I lack nothing."

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*"I will arise and go to my Father."*—St. Luke xv. 18.

You have, my dear young friends, all read or heard read the parable of the Prodigal Son, as related by St. Luke. You there find to what dire necessity this young man was brought before he thought of returning to the father whose heart he had almost broken by his wicked course of conduct; and you read that the kind, indulgent parent was delighted to receive back the lost one; how his heart was melted with compassion, "and while yet afar off he ran to meet him, fell on his neck and kissed him."

This parable tells us of the degradation to which this young man had been reduced. We read that he had become a swine herd—an occupation held in horror by the Jews; that "he fain would have filled his belly with the husks the swine did eat; and no man gave unto him." The husks here spoken of are generally, I believe, considered to be the fruit of the charob tree—a tree very common in Palestine, Greece, Italy, Provence and Barbary. It is suffered to ripen and grow dry on the tree. The poor feed on it, and the cattle are fattened by it. The substance of the husks, or pods—for it is of the Leguminous family—is filled with a sweetish kind of juice resembling black honey.



The young man, not daring even to touch this food given to the swine, remembers how many of his father's hired servants had bread enough and to spare, while he was perishing with hunger. Then the recollection of all his senseless folly causes him to cry aloud, "I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son; make me as one of thy hired servants." How different was his reception to his deserts; for his father orders the best robe to be brought, a ring for his hand, and shoes for his feet. The ring appears, from various parts of Scripture, to be a peculiar mark of distinction; for if you refer to the forty-first chapter of Genesis and forty-second verse, you will find that King Pharaoh took a ring off his own hand and put it on Joseph's. Also, in the eighth chapter of Esther and second verse, we read that King Ahasuerus took off the ring which he had given to Haman, and gave it to Mordecai, and it is also alluded to by St. James in the second verse of the second chapter of his General Epistle.

After these marks of his father's favour, he further orders "the fatted calf to be killed, that they may eat and be merry," and gives this reason for his conduct—"for this my son was dead and is alive again, he was lost and is found." This parable is intended to show us the exceeding great love of God. He sees us while our hearts are still afar off, and addresses us all in these gracious words:—"Return unto the Lord and He will have mercy upon thee, and to our God for He will abundantly pardon." Again, "He that cometh unto Me I will in nowise cast out." Oh! the unspeakable love and condescension of our Father. Let us all listen to His voice, and beware how we slight His offered mercy, "lest He swear in His wrath that we shall not enter into His rest."

The illustration of this parable by a tale, suggests to me the history of a young man who, like the prodigal son, had spent all his living in riot and rebellion against his Maker's laws. His father, the clergyman of the parish, was a kind, indulgent parent; but the young man hated the wholesome discipline of his home, and sought in foreign climes companions and pursuits more congenial to his taste. He wished to escape the eye of his father—of God's eye, you may be sure, he never thought. No! for those children who think that by eluding their parents' vigilance they may safely plunge into riot and excess, seldom cast a thought, you may feel certain, upon these words, "Thou God seest me;" or if they do, they banish it by too often steeping their senses in the forgetfulness of the wine-cup.

It was not until every friend, or foe, I should rather say, had forsaken this young man, that he remembered the fond father, the indulgent mother; how he had spurned their counsels, and would have none of their reproof. He thought of the disgrace he had brought on their proud name, and he felt that to be spurned as a dog from their door was no more than his desert. Yet he felt that the love of his gentle mother would still cling around him could he only arise and go to her, and in the emphatic language of Holy Writ confess that "he was no longer worthy to be called her son."

His thoughts reverted back to that happy time ere vice had blackened his fair fame. How calm and peaceful had been his home! His parents had surrounded him with everything which could conduce either to his comfort, amusement or instruction. There he had listened to the word of Holy Writ expounded by his noble father, as well as from the pulpit of the church where he had so long been the revered and honoured pastor. There he had listened to the sweet voice of his mother, praying for

him, her unworthy son. And there also had been born his darling sister, whose innocent love he had blasted by dragging the object of it into the deep pit of sin and folly.

Now, where were they? He shuddered as he asked himself the question. Would he find them still in the home his cruelty had made so desolate, or had their broken spirits found peace "where the wicked cease from troubling, and where the weary are at rest?" He was, however, determined once more to tread his native village, even if it were as a perfect stranger. He felt how few would recognize his feeble step, the face more worn with sickness than with time. On his brow still lingered the wreck of noble passions—the faithless pledge of all he might have been. What is he now?—

"An erring child of crime,  
A stranger in his own—his native clime;  
Without a hope—except to die at last  
Where his brief years of happiness were passed."

His heart yearned to behold again that fond mother's face, whose undying love he felt

"Guilt could not stain, nor infamy remove."

He gains the hill at last, and, oh! how his guilty soul reflected back all the departed joys, as he gazed once more upon the turf his childish feet had trod. The ivy tower, from whose giddy height he had so often, in the very wantonness of mischief, hurled the tender nestlings down to the feet of his compassionate sister, whose little tender heart rebelled against such cruel sport, and whose entreaties for mercy he had spurned with such laughable scorn. The sweet-briar roses that he had himself planted over the sunny bower still smiled on him as of yore. The pretty church,

in which he had so often listened to the voice of his father—all looked the same as in his hours of guileless infancy. And when he gazed upon the familiar scene where once in innocence and peace he dwelt,

“Feelings awoke, that long in darkness slept,  
And the poor exile like an infant wept.”

The first time I saw this young man was at church some weeks after his return. I was very young at the time, and could scarcely comprehend all the sin of his exceedingly sinful life. I knew his father and mother and sister (who was married to a cousin of my own), and also that a great sorrow connected with their only son had fallen upon them. To them he had long been as one dead, for they had heard no tidings of his whereabouts for years. But what a weight the heart will bear, and break not, if upheld by the soul's sincere desire—prayer. Many and earnest were those poured out at the Throne of Grace that this child, like the prodigal son of our Saviour's parable, might yet return convinced of his sin, and receiving that pardon they were only too ready to bestow. Great, then, unspeakable must have been their joy when this their son “who was lost was found, was dead and was alive again.”

It was always with a feeling of awe that I approached this young man, old in his prime. Children are easily impressed by any mystery, and there was a gentleness and tenderness about his mother's look and speech with him which could not be perceived with any other member of her family. His two little nieces would sit silent and hushed on his knee, gazing into the kind but melancholy face, as he told them some tale of foreign lands, or displayed before their wondering eyes shells from ocean cast, fit gems for a palace.



"In these brief moments he almost forgot  
The guilt, the shame, and anguish of his lot."

But on him it was plain to see that the wasting hand of disease had already laid its finger, sapping the foundation of life, and making him feel, as he gazed around on all the beauty which he had once so loathed, that not many suns would rise and set for him.

His sister used often to talk to me about her brother, of his deep and sincere repentance, although she never alluded to the bitter wrong he had done her. Poor girl ! he had worked sore sorrow for her ; but his guilt had been permitted to save her from a union with one who was not worthy her pure and guileless love. She had been some years wedded to one whose sterling worth would have been unacknowledged by her whilst she dwelt in the presence of her brother's friend ; but he had sunk into his untimely grave, a victim to his vicious courses, whilst her husband still lives beloved and honoured by all with whom he is surrounded. Alas ! for the pleasures of sin ; they are but for a season—as fleeting as the shadowy clouds which flit across the stormy sky, leaving nought but a bitter sting behind.

How many consequences of evil courses do we see, day after day, in this city where we dwell—suicides, fighting, wife-beating, &c.—while men leave their wives and children to starve, or beg their daily crust, in order that they may follow the multitude to do evil, and sink at last into the drunkard's grave. Unfortunately, this vice is not confined to men alone. How often, in my visits among the poor, do I see the swollen face of the intoxicated mother, as she beats the poor little helpless babes who are crying for the bread her own hand robs them of, in order that she may procure the fatal draught ! How often are my ears

assailed with the vulgar, obscene and unholy epithets lavished on these unhappy ones, as blow after blow descends on their defenceless bodies ! Alas ! no wonder that, brought up from the cradle in such scenes, they in their turn fill our prison cells with thieves, drunkards and midnight brawlers. This is but too true a picture of what really passes before our eyes. Ought you not, then, my dear young friends, to be thankful that your parents send you to the Sabbath school, in which you are taught the danger of following such evil courses ?

I fear I cannot make this tale very interesting, for it was but occasionally that I saw young Herbert—just during a visit to my cousin ; so it is not possible to weave the subject so much into the form of a tale as an exhortation ; therefore I shall not lengthen it further than to tell you that he came home to die. Although there were times when, through his fond mother's fears, hope's delusive ray would cheer her sad heart—his pale cheeks would wear at times the bright crimson of returning health—but faithless was its promise. His mother, night after night, would her unwearied vigils keep, praying fervently to God that his life might be spared, but if not, that he might have strength given him in the hour of mortal need. But he grew weaker day by day ; he could no longer be led into the sunny bower, where the roses he had planted in the days of his innocence were flourishing in all their wild magnificence, casting showers of rosy leaves with every breath that blew.

Poor wreck ! he would talk to his fond mother of the days gone by ; of all his wasted opportunities ; while she would point the finger of hope and faith to the spotless Lamb of God.

“ And thus he lingered on ! midst hopes and fears,  
That waken'd oft a mother's smiles and tears,  
Till in her arms he died.”

But not before, I feel sure, upon his tortured heart had descended the peace of God, causing him to cast all his cares upon Him who has promised, “He that cometh unto me I will in nowise cast out.”

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*“ He being dead yet speaketh.”*

These words, my dear young friends, are to be found in the latter clause of the fourth verse of the eleventh chapter of St. Paul's Epistle to the Hebrews. In the former part we read of “the excellence of Abel's sacrifice, because it was offered by faith, God Himself testifying of his gifts.” And St. Paul adds these words: “By it he being dead yet speaketh.”

It would be well for all if we could apply these words to ourselves. We speak not with our tongues alone, but with what will have had far more effect—our good or evil example. If, then, such is the case, does it not call on us all to be circumspect in our walk through this life, that we bring neither shame or reproach on our Christian profession? Let our station in this world be either in a high or humble path, our example may influence the great mass of those with whom we have spent our lives. All wish to be kindly remembered after they have passed away, and all are regretted in proportion to the love borne them.

How will a mother mourn for her little innocent babe! its artless ways and winning smiles are remembered long after its little body is mouldered in the grave. A father will mourn for the son cut off in his prime, because he remembers all his kind efforts to render the evening of his days calm and serene :

his dutiful conduct, his many acts of willing obedience, all live within his memory. "Although he is dead, yet he speaketh."

It was but a short time ago that I overheard two persons thus speaking of the sudden death of a young man :—" Ah, well ! it is a good thing for his mother that he is gone ; he was never anything but a sorrow and trouble to her. No one could respect him ; he was a drunken, profligate and worthless fellow, with a bad word for every one ; his mother ought to thank God that he has gone from her." Here, then, was a fearful realization of our text—" He being dead yet speaketh." This young man's character doubtless added a tenfold sting to his mother's anguish, for, alas ! " she had no hope in his death." There were no kindly memories for him ; he had hated all, and was hated by all.

I am now going to illustrate this text by an account of a young man whom I knew only for a very short time before his death, but whose mourned and honoured memory fully proves the truth of these words : " He being dead yet speaketh."

Charles Richley was the eldest son of poor but respectable parents, his father being a day labourer. He resided in a picturesque village about a mile from the estate owned by my uncle. The clergyman of the parish was one of those noble men who earnestly sought the spiritual welfare of his flock. He had suffered much family trouble, his young wife and two children having been torn from his loving eyes, in the short space of three weeks, by a malignant fever. Heavy as was his burden, he never allowed it to interfere with his duties, which he cheerfully performed ; but I well recollect, when staying with my cousins, how sad it used to make me feel,



when afternoon service was over, to watch him turn to his desolate home, passing close by the grave where lay those so precious to him, and whose gentle memories dwelling in his heart were almost enough to make him turn from his duties with the sickly feeling of utter loneliness. But Mr. Huntly knew that they were in God's hands, lent to him but for a season, and he tried to practise what he had so often to preach, viz., submission to His will.

I saw a good deal of Mr. Huntly ; he was a frequent visitor at my uncle's, three of my cousins being teachers in his Sunday school. Charles Richley had, from being the first scholar, risen to be teacher, and was highly respected and trusted by Mr. Huntly. All spoke well of him ; I heard everywhere what a good son he was to his sickly mother, what a help to his hard-working father, and what an affectionate guide to his blind sister. If any one required a kind action performed, a distant errand run, or a sick person sat up with, Charles was in universal request.

It was during my stay at C—— Hall that I accompanied my cousins to the Sabbath school, which was held an hour previous to the afternoon service. Charles was pointed out to me as he sat diligently engaged in teaching a class of eight boys, who seemed most attentive to their youthful teacher. I remember the earnestness with which he taught ; nothing seemed to distract his attention from his pupils ; so wrapped up in his subject did he appear, that the hour seemed all too short for all he had to tell.

After service, my cousins asked him whether he could spare time to assist them in preparing for the annual Sunday school pic-nic, which was always held in my uncle's grounds, and I was impressed with the pleasant answer and good-natured alacrity

with which Charles yielded a ready assent to be at their service at any time when called on. There was no apology that his time was so fully employed, so as to render his service a favour—an excuse but too often resorted to when people wish to escape trouble and responsibility.

It was a happy gala afternoon, this Sunday school picnic. A soft, sweet, sunny day in June; troops of merry children assembled in the park, where games of all kinds were entered into with the glee belonging to happy childhood. Water boiled gipsy fashion, and a table of nature's own providing was spread with fruit and cakes of all kinds, and eaten with a relish you can scarcely imagine. By English cottage children, the cakes, hot buns and fruit, which so often form part of the meals of Canadian children, are seldom tasted except on such a day as this, and consequently were eaten with a zest almost unknown on this continent. Charles, as usual, made himself generally useful filling mugs, fetching water, swinging the little ones, throwing balls for the boys, and occasionally holding an infant, that the mother might sip in comfort that rare treat to her—a cup of good tea.

Just before the children were summoned together to sing the evening hymn, I happened to see Charles lying under the shade of one of the large oaks which overshadowed a pure mimic lake of water, and going up to him asked whether he felt much fatigued with the labour in which he had taken such an active part. He answered, "No, not at all, but I was merely gazing on the glory of the setting sun. The rising and setting of that orb, Miss Fanny," he continued, "has always a peculiar fascination for me; when such beauty gilds this world, what must be the glory of the unknown one?"

I looked at the intelligent face, so bright now as the shadow

cast on it by the radiance of the setting sun seemed to play as a halo round his head. How little either of us thought at that moment how near he was to that unseen land ! He spoke again of the wonder which must encompass the soul as it passed from this perishing earth into the presence of the Eternal. He said, “how often he fancied what a feeling of delight and astonishment it would be to his sister, Mary, if her eyesight was suddenly restored, so she could gaze on what to her was a sealed mystery—the light of day.” He then told me of the sudden death that morning of an aged Christian woman, and then exclaimed with much fervour, “Fancy what joy hers must have been—she closed her eyes in sleep, and awoke in heaven.” To me sudden death had always been, as it is now, associated with an indescribable feeling of dread, and I said so to Charles. He answered me, “If we live as if each moment was to be our last, we could not fear ; death is but the commencement of a new and holier existence, and should have no terrors to any but the wilfully impenitent.”

Before I went to bed that night, I repeated this conversation to my uncle and aunt, and they remarked that “if every one lived as Charles did, they need not fear when the shadow of death descended.”

It was while we were all seated at breakfast next morning, talking over yesterday’s *fête*, that my uncle was called out of the room. He was absent some few minutes, and when he returned his first exclamation was, “Charles Richley is dead . Every voice was hushed, every face paled as the words fell with startling distinctness on our ears. Dead !—it did not seem possible—that bright boy, so full of life and health but yesterday !—surely there must be some mistake. Alas ! it was but too true. My uncle informed us that it had always been

Charles's custom to rise at daybreak, but not having done so this morning, his parents, supposing him tired with yesterday's labours, did not wish to disturb him; but one of his brothers requiring some implement of industry which Charles always kept in his room, had gone softly in to fetch it, and was surprised to find him half sitting up in his bed, as though in the act of rising. The casement window at the foot of his bed, looking towards the east, was wide open—probably had not been closed at all through the sultry night. His eyes were fixed on the beautiful blue sky, but fixed in death. Charles's bright vision of the glorious future was now unfolded to his gaze. He had evidently passed away without a pang or struggle, so calm and peaceful was the expression of his face: so, "Died by the visitation of God" was the verdict rendered.

On the next Sabbath afternoon he was buried; the school was closed for that hour. We all stood in the churchyard whilst Mr. Huntley read our beautiful Church service for the dead. Last Sunday he had been with his class at school; gone with them to the holy sanctuary; and now the dark grave had opened for that bright and youthful saint. Tears and sobs resounded through the church, as, after the funeral, Mr. Huntly preached from the text, "He is not dead, but sleepeth," and drew his lesson from the sad event which had filled all hearts with sorrow, and with the dread certainty that "in the midst of life we are in death."

I need scarcely tell you how Charles was missed. Not a cottage was entered but we heard of some act of his kindness. Here a gate mended for a poor cripple, here a shelf put up, here a rude cradle made for some peevish child—small things in themselves, but all tending to show his generous kindness to all. One poor old blind woman wept as she told us of his nightly



visits to read to her from the pages of Sacred Writ ; another, lame, for whom every morning he would fetch in her supply of wood and water for the day. Wherever we went this truth was apparent, “ Though he was dead, yet he spoke.”

Many years have passed since Charles Richley’s body was committed to the silent grave, but not so his memory. In the village he is still fondly remembered, and little children who were then unborn have been taught to lisp his name, and pray that they may be enabled to follow his bright example, whose whole life was in strict accordance with the golden rule, “ To do to others as we should wish them to do to us.” No stone with its eulogistic epitaph marks the spot in that quiet churchyard where rests his mortal remains, but the grave is still kept by the village children sacred from all desecration, and many a cottage garden is despoiled of its bright blossoms to decorate it, and carefully is every unsightly leaf removed off it. His kind deeds have outlived him ; he needs no epitaph from the sculptor’s hand, for it is engraved on the hearts of those for whom he performed so many kindly deeds. Both old and young, for miles around that pretty village, revere the name of him

“ Who though dead yet speaketh.”

I have now come to the conclusion of the verses chosen by my late pupils for illustration, and I would, in conclusion, say a few words to you all, my dear young friends. Time is going on, and fast bearing us all away from this perishing earth. Let me then, as a sincere friend, exhort you to be more earnest in seeking after the things which tend to your eternal happiness. Do not turn away from serious thoughts to seek the frivolous pleasures of life ; they are as fleeting as the shadows, capable of

giving no lasting satisfaction ; they soon pall on the senses, and end in nought but painful regrets. Seek to render yourselves fit for the heavenly crown ; waste not the precious moments, lest grim death overtake you before you have made your calling and election sure. Weary not in well-doing ; remember how great the prize, and at what price it has been purchased for you.

I wish I could make you believe the deep interest I take in you all, and if the tales in this little book win one serious thought I shall feel amply rewarded. I fain would have my love for you all remembered long after I shall be laid in the silent dust, and I sincerely trust that the hours spent in your Sabbath school will be looked back to by you all with the keenest sense of delight. That God may bless you all with the richness of His grace is my sincere prayer as I say

FAREWELL.







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